

*The Early Years of the Christ*



*The Story of the New  
Immortals,*

*Part 2a:*

*The Early Years of the Christ*

*Including*

*[The Missing Years]*

A Fictional Biography

By

*Richard O'Decatur*

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*This Book is dedicated to my Lord and Savior, Jesus [Yeshua] Christ, whom I met face to face that night in the Spring of 1994. This book, along with the other writings He has inspired me to write are fulfilling His calling to me to be His Minister and His commission to me that night as an Apostle and Prophet of Jesus Christ. I continue to live and write so that His Truths in the Holy Scriptures are revealed and made known that have been hidden by the Traditions of men for the last two thousand years.*

***Richard O'Decatur***

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**Principle Characters*****Medo-Persian Empire***

King Cyrus the Great, leader of the Medes.

King Darius, leader of the Persians.

***Eastern Scythian Empire of the Massagetae and Dahae***

Queen Tomyris, Queen of the Massagetae.

***Greco-Macedonian Empire***

Phillip, who formed this great empire and began its quest of expansion.

Alexander the Great, Phillip's son who finished conquering most of the western civilization at that time.

***Parthian Empire, formed by the merging of two Eastern Scythian tribes***

Emperor Phraates III who began his reign in 40 B.C.

King Antigonus, Jewish vassal King, under the rule of Parthia.

Phraates IV who began his reign in 37 B.C.

Lux, chief of the Magi, priest of Yahweh in the city of Asaac, one of the capital cities of Parthia.

A fictional character.

Mors, one of the Magi, priest of Yahweh in Asaac.

A fictional character.

Rav, one of the Magi, priest of Yahweh in Asaac.

A fictional character.

### ***Roman Empire***

Mark Antony, General of Rome's legions sent to retake Judea and Galilee from the Parthians.

Caesar, one of the names used to designate the highest ruler of the Roman Empire.

### ***Kingdom of Heaven***

***[Please note when the setting is in heaven the Hebrew name of God the Father, Yahweh will be used. Also, the Hebrew name for Jesus, Yeshua will be used. This will help distinguish the Heavenly Father and the Son.]***

Yahweh Almighty [God the Father] El Shaddai, EL meaning Elohim and Shaddai meaning the Almighty One, the one whom Jesus called His Heavenly Father while He was on earth half-human and half- divine.

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Jesus, [Yeshua] the Christ of YAHWEH, preexisting with the Father and active at the creation of all that exists. While on earth he was half-human and half-divine

Michael, the great archangel who served Yahweh in heaven and on earth

Gabriel, the great archangel who was the messenger of Yahweh to individuals on earth

*The Kingdom of Hell*

The Devil; Abaddon, the Destroyer; often called Satan, the adversary; possibly known as Lucifer, the Great Archangel before he rebelled against Yahweh.

*Judea and Galilee*

King Herod, Jewish vassal King, under the rule of Rome (there were numerous kings by the name of Herod. The one who reigned after Rome retook Judea in 37 B.C. is different from the one who was reigning when Yeshua was born.)

Joseph [Yoseph] of Arimathea, uncle of Joseph; the carpenter, and great uncle to Jesus. His nickname was Joe.

Joseph [Yoseph], the carpenter who married Mary. His nickname was Jossi.

Mary [Miriam], the young Jewish woman who became the mother of Jesus [Yeshua].

Elisabeth, Mary's older cousin, wife of Zacharias.

Zacharias, priest of God [Yahweh] in Jerusalem  
husband of Elisabeth.

John [Yon], called the Baptist, was a second cousin of Jesus; Only son of Zacharias and Elisabeth.

James [Yacob], Jose [Jossi], Judah [Yudah], and Simon, half-brothers of Jesus born of His mother, Mary and fathered by Joseph the carpenter several years after Jesus was born.

Ahmed, a sailor trusted to watch after the young Jesus and teach him about sailing.

A fictional character.

### ***The Isle of Briton [England]***

King Arviragus, ruler of a large portion of Briton that included Glastonbury and the port of Bristol.

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All the characters listed here were actual people, Deities, or angels except those that I have noted were fictional characters or fictional names.

$\mathcal{R}$  of  $\mathcal{D}$

## Prologue

This book is about the early life of Jesus the Christ before he began his ministry at age thirty. He was half divine being the Son of God and half human being physically the son of a young Jewish woman who conceived Him by the power of the Holy Spirit. This woman, the child, and others of this story were all primarily Hebrews living under the subjugation of Roman control in the land that was originally granted by God to Abraham's lineage. The common language these people spoke was Hebrew and Aramaic which is a 'sister' language to Hebrew. Hebrew was the language of weekly meetings in the synagogues of each city each Sabbath. These people wrote in Hebrew or Aramaic as well.

The vast majority of Christianity has been raised using the English transliteration, Jesus, from the Greek name Iesous. Most do not know of the Hebrew names for our Christian Deities. Our Heavenly Father, has the Hebrew name of Yahweh. The name God in Hebrew is Elohim. Most Christians do not know that there simply was no letter 'J' in any language until about 400 years ago<sup>1</sup>. This means that the Old Testament name of the Father could not have been, 'Jehovah', but is rather Yahweh. Do you know that the New Testament name 'Jesus', was not the name our Lord had when He was born and lived a physical life for 33 ½ years on this earth?

The Christ was born of a Jewish couple who gave Him a Hebrew<sup>2</sup> name as instructed by the Archangel Gabriel. That name was **Yeshua**. When this story involves the Father and the Son in Heaven, I will use their Hebrew Personal Names of Yahweh (rather than God or the Father) and Yeshua (rather than Jesus or the Son). The English name Jesus came from transliterations of the Koine Greek text New Testament during the last 400 years. I have read that the original New Testament was written in Hebrew and/or Aramaic and not Koine Greek<sup>3</sup>. I believe and there are many references that our Lord

used the name Yeshua in eternity past before He was born in Bethlehem in Judea and that was His name during His life. Yet, this name is so ‘foreign’ to most Christians that in the interest of making this story more readable, I will use the name that is familiar: Jesus the Christ. As one of this book’s purpose is to educate Christians of what life was like over two thousand years ago, I will provide the Hebrew names that were commonly used back then when each person is introduced.

There are Sacred Name groups that prefer the use of various Hebrew names; however, each group only accepts and use various names. The Hebrew name that I prefer for the Christ is Yeshua but many groups prefer Yahshua and still other groups use other Hebrew names. So, if I tried to please one, I offend another. Then there are groups called Messianic Jews that I believe mostly use Yeshua Messiah<sup>4</sup>.

I am simply going to use the name that has been the standard of New Testament translations, Jesus Christ. I believe our Lord hears those who call upon Him regardless of what name they have been taught to use. For about two millennia those who followed the Christ were called Christians<sup>5</sup>. The word ‘Christ’ came from the Greek translation of the New Testament meaning ‘the Anointed One’. I believe most prefer to be called Christians rather than Messianics. It is my opinion that the title ‘Christ’ seems to look forward while the title ‘Messiah’ seems to look backward.

Most of my early life, the only name I had for God was our heavenly Father. About 20 years ago, I learned that His personal name was Yahweh. This name was hidden in the name LORD (all caps) translated from YHWH, the tetragrammaton in the KJV and most other version of the Old Testament. That is why in this book I often refer to the Father as Yahweh and sometimes the shorten version of Yah.



It is my understanding that Jesus generally condemned Jewish Traditions as related in Mark chapter 7. Because of this, I also do not follow Jewish Traditions as the Messianic Jews and members of most Seventh Day Sabbath Christian Churches do. Yet rather than use what I personally prefer, I am writing for the vast majority's enlightenment and enjoyment.

Please check out the Reference Section that provides information that will greatly add to your understanding of Christ's early life as well as provide you with information about the New Testament that you will not find in most Christian book stores. Such as the fact that the original text of the New Testament was not written in Koine Greek but rather in the Hebrew/ Aramaic languages<sup>6</sup>.

This book begins by setting the stage for the Christ's birth by telling about His mother, Mary, whose Hebrew name was Miriam, and Joseph, whose Hebrew name was Yoseph before they met, also others who were integral in His life, and about empires rising and falling. Please, do not overlook the fact that this story has a lot of content based on information outside of the Bible. As such some of it is speculation. Please understand that most of it may well be true while other parts may be fictional.

At first, I struggled in finding references that were needed to write this book. Then I remembered a book I had read about twenty years ago. Fortunately, I owned a copy of this rare book in my personal library and was able to read again chapters that provided references I needed to get this story going.

That wonderful book was written by Steven M. Collins entitled "*The 'Lost' Ten Tribes of Israel...Found.*"<sup>7</sup> In Chapter 9, in Part 1, he wrote about Jesus' birth to age 12 and in Part 2, about Jesus age 12 to 30. I would highly encourage everyone to get and read the entire book, "*The 'Lost' Ten Tribes of Israel...Found*", by Mr. Steven Collins. While it is no longer in print, you can get an

electronic copy for Kindles from Amazon. In Mr. Collins' book, he expertly provides many facts and information from ancient reference books as well as his own conjecture concerning things that may have happened before Christ's birth and particularly what Jesus was possibly doing between the ages of 12 and 30, which I found simply amazing. I assure you that Mr. Collins' book is thoroughly referenced to Biblical scripture and historic information from early historians such as Josephus. I know of no other Biblical literary work that comes close to the scholarly work of providing documentary facts that supplies this missing information that Mr. Collins has done in writing his book. I will be referencing a number of passages in his book.

Information concerning the Parthian Empire and the extent of the Roman Empire's mining activities as far as the Western Hemisphere are presented in his book and I found this information simply incredible. Mr. Collins went further in following traces of information contained in a great number of ancient reference books to document the migration of the Ten Northern Tribes of Israel during the last three thousand years since they were initially taken captive by the Assyrians. This was the primary focus of his book. I have left most of this out except as it mentioned Parthia because this was where the Magi came from.

These facts provide information that I feel should be known by all who follow the Christ (Christians and Messianic Jews). Some people really enjoy reading factual non-fiction documentary books that while full of details such books cannot provide possible or probable personal details because most of these are based on speculation. Perhaps just as many people enjoy reading fictional biographies that have been enhanced to provide suspense, humor, excitement, and other elements that are entertaining while not altering essential facts of what has happened in the past. Author Herman Wouk did this in his Fictional Biography novels about pre

and post WWII with the titles of “*The Winds of War*” and “*War and Remembrance*”. I find this kind of book extremely enjoyable to read. That is what I have attempted to do in writing this story that brings to life, individuals we have read about in the Bible. My book tells what they may have said, thought, or done in detail.

I gathered many footnotes of what Mr. Collins’ wrote in his book and it was at this time I began to see scenes in my mind as I began to dream again. Much of what I have written is what I saw in my dreams primarily while sleeping and sometimes in day dreams. Whether this was simply my imagination or actually inspiration from God the Father [Hebrew Yahweh] and the Son, Jesus [Hebrew Yeshua]; I simply cannot answer because I do not know for sure. Anyway, I think you will find this is a very interesting story that fills in the missing years of Jesus Christ while he walked this earth, truly half-human, and half-divine.

I am writing this book using my pen name, **Richard of Decatur** or **Richard O’Decatur**. This name uses the New Testament practice of a person’s name being their first name and then the town or city they are from. Such as Saul of Tarsus, Joseph of Arimathea, and Jesus of Nazareth. At this time, I wish to remain as anonymous as best I can. The only following I wish is those that buy and read my books. I am forever a seeker of Truth and find it in the Word of God, the Holy Bible.

*Richard of Decatur*

Author, Apostle, Prophet, and Minister directly called by Jesus [Yeshua] Christ.

$\mathcal{R}$  of  $\mathcal{D}$

Part One:  
Preparations for the Coming of  
the Christ

$\mathcal{R}$  of  $\mathcal{D}$

## Chapter 1

### **Have you ever wondered?**

Nearly everyone in America has seen many pictures as well as actual Nativity scenes on front lawns, in front of churches, and other places with the baby Jesus lying in a manger. There are also statues of Mary, Jesus's mother, sitting next to the manger with her husband Joseph standing beside her. You see lots of straw and possibly some farm animals especially sheep in the background. On one side, you probably will see several men who are dressed in plain robes holding shepherd hooks looking upon the scene. Usually, everybody is dressed in light colored clothing and wear leather sandals. Mary and possibly Joseph are dressed in white robes. Across from the shepherds, you often see three men dressed in much finer bright-multicolored clothing with lots of purple colors and tall turbans on their heads. These represent the Magi from the East, wise men, or three kings as some cultures call them. They hold in their hand's casks or some other kind of package bearing expensive gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh for the baby Jesus. Sounds about right, huh? On the other hand, did you feel that in the scenes I just described that something was not quite right?

Those who avidly study the Bible probably catch errors commonly presented in Nativity scenes. Have you ever seen a horse in one? I have. Problem is, horses were not all that common in Bethlehem when Jesus was born. Camels and Donkeys (the KJV uses the word *asses*) were quite common then but how often do you see one of them in today's scenes. Goats were also common but not as much as sheep in Bethlehem when Jesus was born. Besides providing meat to eat, their wool provided fabric for clothing that kept a person warm even when wet from having to work out in the rain. How often have you seen some goats in a Nativity scene? What about cows and pigs?

There were oxen that were much like cows, that they often used to pull heavy wagons. Do you know about the dietary laws the Jews kept? That would make it very unusual for pigs to be near where Jesus was born. However, the scriptures show that there were herds of swine (more commonly called pigs or hogs in our language) in some areas for we read in the New Testament that when He was of a mature age, Jesus cast the demons from a man named Legion into a herd of about 3,000 swine or pigs.

How many shepherds do you usually see? The Bible does not say exactly how many but from the wording we know there were several. Also, the weather in Palestine during December is so cold there would have been no shepherds tending sheep in the fields (Luke 2: 8 – 20). All the sheep would have been moved from the fields to shelters and pens. That means Jesus was born in the fall sometime during our months of September or October and possibly during the Feast of Tabernacles celebrated by the Jews going to Jerusalem (Leviticus 23: 33 - 43).

Have you ever seen a Nativity scene with four or five Magi? How about no Magi? If you saw a Nativity scene with no Magi, would you possibly think the builder of the scene made a mistake? You might think that he possibly ran out of money and could not afford to get figures to represent the Magi. Truth is there were zero Magi that saw the baby Jesus in the manger.

If you really know your Bible, you probably remember that in the scriptural account of the Magi or Wise Men found in Matthew chapter two, it does not state that there were three. There could have been two or a dozen as the scriptures used the word 'men'. Perhaps, sometime in the past, someone read about the three different types of gifts (gold, frankincense, and myrrh) and decided this meant there were three Magi (or three Wise men or three Kings) and each one



was bearing a different gift. This is someone's guess or opinion, but it is not a scriptural fact.

Yet, there is a considerably greater mistake made in regard to the Magi. The Bible clearly states that they never went to the stable and saw the baby in a manger. They went to a house and they did not find the baby Jesus. They found the young child, Jesus Christ, who was about two years of age when they came there. Yes, it is a fact that the Magi did not arrive until about two years after Jesus was born. Hum, very interesting. You can verify the truth of what I have just written by reading Matthew chapter two. I will reprint two verses that clearly show that Jesus was about age two when the Wise men came to a house where he was living and not the stable with a manger.

Matthew 2:11, 16 NKJV

*11And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him.*

*16Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men.*

I wanted to present this information to show you that there have been numerous misrepresentations about what happened at Jesus's birth for many centuries and no one has stepped forward to insist that this be corrected. So, no one should get really upset by what I have written about these things. I would hope that the reader would more greatly appreciate that Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and others were real live

people. They had their problems and they had their happy occasions as well. I have not read in the Bible that no one should speculate as to what life was really like back then. My book is not the first to present things about those that lived when Jesus was born to the time he was killed. However, what I have written is like nothing you have ever read before in another book.

Things that happened at the time of Christ's birth that most people that follow Christ [most call themselves Christians] simply do not know about are just the beginning of their lack of knowledge about the life of Jesus Christ. But, where could they find this information? In the Bible, most of the years of his life are not mentioned. Think about this. The life of the most important person, who ever lived, especially to those who follow Jesus Christ, is chronicled in the Bible and there are nearly twenty-eight years of gaps in the story of his life by the time he reaches thirty years of age. The New Testament books of Mark and John skip right to the time when Jesus began His ministry at age thirty. Only Matthew and Luke try to tell anything about what took place before Jesus was thirty years old.

In Matthew and Luke, we find more about Joseph and Mary than we do about Jesus. We read about the difficulty of Joseph accepting that something miraculous happened to Mary and caused her to be with child. Then we read about them going to Bethlehem. While the Biblical account of Jesus's birth in a stable is spectacular, this event only lasts for just one evening of His life. Then we have a brief Biblical account of what happened when Jesus was circumcised at eight days and afterwards, we can read of Mary and Joseph going to the Temple to offer the turtledoves for her purification sacrifice. Then the strict Biblical account jumps to the visit by the Magi at age two of the Christ. There seems to be more about the Magi than about Jesus.

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That night after the Magi's visit, we read about an urgent trip (or escape) by Joseph, Mary, and the young Jesus to Egypt. It does not say how long they stayed in Egypt nor in what city. Some scholars say it lasted a few days. I have read speculation by other Bible scholars that it was at least two years and could have been nearly ten years.

Next, thing we read about in the Biblical account says after living in Egypt, they moved directly to Nazareth rather than back to Bethlehem. While this account tells us about what Joseph did and his dreams, hardly anything is mentioned directly about Jesus. Next, we jump forward about ten years, and we begin to read about Jesus when he was twelve years of age. His parents take Him to Jerusalem for the Passover. When they leave to return to Nazareth, after a day's journey, His parents discover that Jesus is missing. They spend three days searching and then find Him in the Temple reasoning with the teachers. The next thing we read skips past eighteen years of His life to when he shows up at the Yordan River where he asks John the Baptist to baptize Him.

Think about the following. Most assume that Jesus was a carpenter because this was the trade of his earthly (step) father, Joseph. At that time, sons more often than not took up the trade of their father. However, if Jesus had actually practiced this trade, why do we have a scripture that says, "*Is this not the carpenter's son, the son of Mary*" (Matthew 13: 55). While the account in Mark 6: 3 says, "*Is this not the carpenter, the son of Mary*", between the two it seems that he was primarily recognized by his relationship with His mother, Mary, and her husband Joseph who had been a carpenter rather than as having been a carpenter Himself building in Nazareth from age twelve to thirty.

This further seems to indicate to me that Jesus might well have been away from Nazareth for some period of time before he began

His ministry at the age of thirty. But, where could he have gone and how could they have afforded the cost of Him traveling a considerable distance from Nazareth for such a long time? Another important thing is left out of the Biblical account. What happened to Joseph, the husband of Mary? He must have died sometime after the incident when Jesus was twelve and before He was thirty. It seems like Jesus had been gone for a long time when the incident mentioned in the previous paragraph of Matthew 13 happened. It was His family relationship with Mary, His mother and His brothers and sisters that caused people to remember who He was rather than anything directly about Himself, His life, or what He was or had been doing.

While it took three days for His parents to find Him in the very large city of Jerusalem when He was twelve, Nazareth was not a large town. People would have crossed paths with Jesus on a regular basis and especially at the synagogue every week. Yet, it seems like this did not happen or they would have known who He was on His own merit. That He was primarily identified because of His father's occupation and His mother and siblings make a very strong case that He must have not been in Nazareth for an extended period of time to cause others to not recognize Him on His own merit. Are you like me in wanting to know the answer to where was He living and what was He doing during this formative period?

We read in the Bible that he confounded and astonished the priest and scholars with His understanding of the Biblical scrolls in the Temple in Jerusalem at age twelve. Yet, eighteen years later, it was at the synagogue in Nazareth that people were astonished at His learning. Are we to assume that while Jesus at age twelve spoke out and questioned the priests and teachers in Jerusalem that He kept silent in Nazareth for the next eighteen years especially when it came to Biblical truths? We are told that Jesus's custom was to be in the

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synagogue each Sabbath (Luke 4: 16). That means that if He was there, He would regularly go to the synagogue in Nazareth each Sabbath. If that were so, how could He have remained virtually unknown by the priests, Rabbis, and teachers there? I contend that for Him to have gone virtually unnoticed for eighteen years He must have not been living in Nazareth for many if not nearly all of the eighteen years between ages twelve and thirty.

This missing information about the life of Jesus has bothered me for many years. I have often thought about possible scenarios to explain where Jesus might have been and what He was doing. However, none really satisfactorily answered the questions I have posed. Then I re-discovered a book that had gathered dust for about twenty years on my library bookcases that again nearly blew my socks off. It provided documentary research about those missing years in the life of Jesus Christ. It also provided information on world events that set the stage for the birth of Christ in Bethlehem.

I must again mention and give credit to the work of Steven M. Collins, and his book entitled “*The ‘Lost’ Ten Tribes of Israel...Found.*” I must credit Mr. Collins’ book, as he expertly provides many facts and information as well as some conjecture concerning things that may have happened before Jesus’s birth and what Jesus was possibly doing between the ages of 12 and 30. I can assure you that Mr. Collins’ book is thoroughly referenced to Biblical scripture and historic information from early historians such as Josephus. I simply know of no other Biblical literary work that comes close to the scholarly work of providing this missing information that Mr. Collins has done in writing his book.

I used to wonder about the mysterious Joseph of Arimathea. In the Bible, he shows up after Jesus’s death and goes to Pilate to demand the body of Jesus. What gave him the right to do this and how did he gain immediate access to Pilate? After reading Mr.

Collins book, I not only had the answers to my questions answered; as I wrote before, I began to have dreams in which I saw Joseph and Mary before they met. I also dreamed about Joseph of Arimathea and how he and Mary's Joseph grew up knowing each other and how this would affect Jesus after He was born. I dreamed of what Jesus and the others in His life were doing nearly on a daily basis before and after His birth and as He grew older.

I hope you will enjoy reading this book, ***The Story of the New Immortals, Part 2; The Early Years of the Christ, Including the Missing Years***, and my other books (recently published), "***The Story of the New Immortals, Part 1; The Beginning of the Beginning***, and "***The Story of the New Immortals, Part 3; The End of the Beginning***". As with these other books, I have called this novel a fictional biography also, because I simply do not know for sure what is my imagination and what might well be inspiration from Yahweh, our Heavenly Father. As this story is about our Elohim (God) and Savior Jesus Christ's early years, I have continually prayed to our Heavenly Father Yahweh for His guidance that everything I write is reverent to Him and My Savior. I do not take lightly the obligation to honor my Savior and Elohim as I write a story that involves what He might have thought, said, or done during His earthly life.

As you read this novel, you will find a story line with narratives and events that attempt to explain possibilities of not only what happened but also why things happened. Consider these following questions as you will be reading what I believe are possible answers based on Biblical and historical facts that my dreams are intertwined with:

- . At what time of the year was Jesus actually born?

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- . In the stable who really came and saw the baby Jesus lying in a manger?
- . Who were the Magi from the East and why and when did they actually visit Mary, Joseph, and Jesus?
- . When did Jesus realize that He was the Son of Yahweh?
- . Did Jesus and John the Baptist know each other while they grew up?
- . Where did Jesus live and what was He doing, from age 12 to 30?
- . When and how did His earthly father, Joseph die?
- . Who was the mysterious Joseph of Arimathea?
- . Was there trade and travel to North America during the time of Christ?
- . Is there any truth to the myths that the Son of Yahweh visited the Mayans, Aztecs, and Incas and told them who He was and that He had to return to His own country in the East where He would be sacrificed for the sins of all mankind?

These and more such questions will be addressed and possibly answered in a fictional biography that the reader will find interesting, intriguing, inspiring and above everything else worth reading. I hope you will read the entire novel as you would other books and make a note of the page number of anything presented that you do not understand or agree with. Then go back and further examine these using your Bible and historic documents to prove otherwise if you can. Of course, you may want to use other reference works but may I caution, all of these writings just like this novel are simply the work of men. Only the Yahweh inspired Word of Elohim [God], the Holy

Bible stands the test of time providing us with Yahweh's unblemished truth.

I expect some readers will have a different opinion or belief concerning certain elements of theology and doctrine I present in this novel. I have experienced that actually few people absolutely and totally agree on every aspect of doctrine written or implied by their specific church and other churches. Actually, many people also do not agree on everything with others of the same church denomination. There are now thousands of separate Christian's church organizations in the world with more forming nearly every day primarily because of disagreements over church doctrines as well as personalities of leaders and administrative practices.

Most people feel every other church organization but their own has strayed from the 'Truth' and some place a label of 'cult' on those whose practices or beliefs radically differ from their own. The Bible instructs Christians to not just disagree with what is to them new or different, but rather search the Bible and prove what is true. If you do not truly know from specific scriptures in Yahweh's Word that presents what to believe in, what to live by, what to stand for and yes, even die for, you will be in peril of falling for something that is not true some time in your life and possibly losing your eternal salvation.

My greatest hope in writing this novel is that it will be instrumental in causing the continual and thorough search of the Holy Scriptures directly by each reader to find and hold onto the everlasting truths of Yahweh that He reveals to each of us individually. That in so doing we will maintain a strong faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior until we meet Him face to face.



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I am *Richard of Decatur* also known as *Richard O'Decatur*, Author, Apostle, Prophet, and Minister directly called by Jesus [Yeshua] Christ to teach what He directly reveals to me in His Word and in my dreams and visions to all who will hear it.

*$\mathcal{R}$  of  $\mathcal{D}$*

## Chapter 2

### **Empires Rising and Falling**

In order to set the stage for the Roman Empire to subjugate Palestine and thereby issue the proclamation we find mentioned in the book of Luke chapter two that resulted in the Christ, Jesus, being born in Bethlehem; we must examine events that took place that impacted the center of the known world at that time. History that we have been told is generally about the Western Civilization and is lacking in respect to what took place in Palestine because it generally ignores what developed in the east. Had we been given a complete historical account of what happened, we would have read about great armed forces at war and the shift of power changing numerous times between the Roman Empire in the West and the Parthian Empire in the East. Lastly, we find the Roman Empire becoming a world power and successfully wrestling back, control over Palestine after losing it for three years to the Empire of Parthia. The treaty the Roman Empire signed with the Empire of Parthia allowed a somewhat peaceful existence in Judea and Galilee for nearly 100 years during which Jesus was born, lived His life, and was crucified on a cross.

Most educational institutions in the Americas and Europe, have concentrated on the civilization of the Western World while virtually ignoring the Eastern World. Therefore, most individuals are ignorant of how the Eastern nations impacted history and what is written in the Bible. The prophecies of Daniel chapter 7 foretold of four great world powers that would come on the scene. The first, Babylon, came on the scene taking the Kingdom of Judah into captivity. The next power that came on the scene was the mighty Medo-Persian Empire. The Medes were ruled by King Cyrus at the

time they defeated Babylon. Later, the Persian Empire rose in power, gained preeminence, and replaced the Medes and its Emperor Darius gave the order that allowed a contingent of Jews to return to rebuild Jerusalem and its Temple.

In the years after being taken captive by the Assyrians, many of those of the Ten Northern Tribes of Israel had eventually overthrown the yoke of the Assyrians and formed their own nations of the Massagetae and the Dahae, together called the Eastern Scythian Empire. Others of the Ten Northern Tribes of Israel formed what was called the Northern Scythian Empire.

Then it was the combined forces of the Northern Scythian Empire, the Eastern Scythian Empire, and the Medes lead by King Cyrus that reduced what remained of the Assyrian Empire to virtual non-existence. Not satisfied with their holdings in the south, approximately 530 B.C., King Cyrus the Great led a vast army of Medes and turned against its former ally, the Eastern Scythian Empire of the Massagetae and Dahae located east of the Caspian Sea. Queen Tomyris of the Massagetae sent two messages offering a peaceful co-existence between the two empires, otherwise, she prophesied that Cyrus, and his army would be destroyed. Both pleas were ignored by Cyrus. This resulted in a very bloody war and eventually led to the death of King Cyrus in approximately 528 B.C. Most of the Mede's army was butchered by the Eastern Scythian army and King Cyrus' body was desecrated. **8**

Not quite two decades later, the Medo-Persians again attempted to expand their domain by attacking into the Black Sea area. King Darius lead his Persian armies through modern Turkey, Bulgaria, and Romania around 512 B.C. However, his 700, 000 men army failed to be a suitable match for the empire of the Northern Scythian tribes. These were formed by many men from the ten northern tribes

of Israel after they overthrew the rule of the Assyrians who had initially taken them captive from Palestine. While they were a peaceful people, who even tried to negotiate with the aggressive Persians, they were very adept at gathering their forces and fighting those who would not leave them in peace. By adopting a scorched earth plan, they drew the Persian army ever further from their supplies with no food sources in the land they passed over.

Finally, King Darius received a strange gift from the Northern Scythians. It contained a bird, a mouse, a frog, and five arrows. Darius' counselors determined the meaning was the following:

*If you do not become as birds and fly away into the sky or become as mice and burrow into the earth or become as frogs and leap into lakes, there will be no homecoming for you, for we will shoot you down with our arrows.*

Unknown to the Persians, the Scythians were trying to persuade the Macedonians to destroy a bridge of ships Darius' army had used to cross the Danube River. If that had been successful, the Scythians would have destroyed the entire Persian army including Darius.

After Darius received the message, he remembered the plight of Cyrus the Great against the Eastern Scythians. After refusing to abide by their warning, Cyrus continued his quest and he and his army was utterly destroyed. Darius became so fearful that he ordered his army to flee leaving the sick and wounded. They charged back and were able to cross the weakest link in his advance, the bridge of ships over the Danube River. The Scythians had not been successful in getting the Greeks to destroy the bridge of ships. As Darius' army retreated, they were fiercely harassed by the Scythians. In this manner, the Scythians had driven back the mighty Persian army without having fought a single major battle head to head. Darius was

more than happy to have escaped alive and with at least half his army intact, back to their homeland.<sup>9</sup>

## **The Macedonian Empire**

The two Eastern Scythian tribes became known as Parthia. After defeating Cyrus, the Great, they grew to become not just an empire, but also a superpower.<sup>10</sup> After the defeat of Darius' army by the Northern Scythians, the Medo-Persian Empire never regained its former glory or power. At first, the Northern Scythian Empire and the Parthian Empire were not aggressive and left the Medo-Persian Empire alone. However, there were other powers waiting for the right moment to take the stage.

While the Medo-Persian armies clashed with the Scythians, the Greco-Macedonian Empire under the leadership of Phillip and later his son, Alexander, pursued conquests in other areas. They soon became a force to be reckoned with. The primary force and power of the Greco-Macedonian Empire was that of the Macedonians. The Macedonians were biding their time while these other empires to their east and south fought. They saw that even the victors lost substantial forces during their battles. They were not ready to join in the fight by helping the Northern Scythians destroy the Persian Army of Darius by destroying the bridge of ships. Yet, they saw that Darius' Army was substantially reduced while retreating.

Before Darius could rebuild his army, they were caught unprepared by a surprise attack by the Armies of the Macedonian Empire. They went on to not only conquer the Medo-Persian Empire but most of the civilized world west of the Northern Scythian Empire and the Parthian Empire. Their leadership wisely chose not to attack but rather negotiate treaties with the Northern Scythian and Parthian Empires. As the Macedonian Empire expanded its rule, its eyes

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began to focus primarily on the south but kept the east in mind. When Alexander died, the power of the empire died with him. The Macedonian Empire was carved up between Alexander's four generals.

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## Chapter 3

### **The Rise of the Roman and Parthian Empires**

As the might of the Macedonian Empire divided, crumbled, and fell; Rome rose in the west and then began to move into the south and east. Eventually, Rome would rule virtually all the lands that bordered the Mediterranean Sea as well as reaching into what would later become known as Europe even to the British Isle off the coast. Its reach actually went as far as the western hemisphere and into North America as it sought raw materials to ever keep building and expanding its war making machine as well as its Empire. When it destroyed what was left of the Macedonian armies it took over Palestine.

During this same time, to the east, Parthia ruled Asian lands from modern Syria to the Indus River in India in the south, upwards to the Caucasus Mountain, and across the Caspian Sea as far as the Oxus River that flowed into the Aral Sea. The Parthian Empire bordered the Roman Empire in Palestine at the Euphrates River.

In 40 B.C., Parthia's new emperor, Phraates III, changed the empire's policy of non-aggression to one of expansion. Emperor Phraates III eyed the province of Judea under the rule of Rome to expand his empire. The area was reported by his spies to be insufficiently garrisoned to hold it against the onslaught of even a moderate size army. Going against the council of the Megistanes, Phraates sent His generals and a large Parthian army on an invasion of Palestine that swept the Roman army out of much of this area of Asia.**11**

From 40 to 37 B.C., Antigonus, a Jewish vassal king, ruled Palestine under the rule of Parthia. The previous king named Herod

had fled for his life from Judea to safety in Rome. There he constantly urged Rome to counter attack and retake Palestine, the land Rome had lost. Rome licked its wounds reeling in shock that its supposed invincible army had been so thoroughly trounced by the Parthian army in so short a time. It would take several years before they fully comprehended what had actually taken place as well as to plan for retaking what they had lost by rebuilding their defeated Eastern legions and replacing its generals.<sup>12</sup>

In the meantime, the Jewish population of Judea responded to the good and just rule of King Antigonus. The area's prosperity grew quickly and a number of Jewish men joined the Parthian army to maintain a guard for their country and resist any return of the cruel and unjust Roman rule they had suffered under for decades. After two years of no attempt by Rome to retake the lands, the Parthian army began to reduce its standing forces and returned to their homelands. This left the defense of Judea and Galilee to small garrisons of Parthian soldiers and local militia in the major towns. For three full years, there was peace and prosperity in the entire Judean and Galilean region. Parthia began to think that Rome had finally accepted their loss and turned its attention to other 'plums' much easier to pluck to their north.

Early in 37 B.C., the Parthian Emperor died, so the Arsacids (the royal family of the lineage of King David through the Phares branch) and Megistanes (the Wise men or Magi who were the priesthood) elected a new emperor, Phraates IV. When Phraates IV took the throne of Parthia, he virtually turned his back on their recently gained territory of Judea and Galilee. His attention from the beginning of his reign was to solidify his power by eliminating all male relatives, including his own father and almost thirty brothers who could be heir to the throne if he died. Many of his brothers had been generals in the vast Parthian legions. Their elimination by the Emperor resulted in a lack of experienced leadership over the armies. Considerable

shuffling and replacing of the top-ranking generals kept all eyes inside of the immediate Parthian Empire and off its recently gained territories. This left the provinces of Judea and Galilee virtually on their own at a very crucial time.

Shortly after Phraates IV took over the Parthian throne, fleets of Roman ships left ports near Rome. Without warning, they began to land a vast army lead by Mark Antony near the port of Joppa on the Mediterranean coast. Herod was on one of the ships but stayed well in the rear ranks of the Roman soldiers, to avoid any chance of being killed by Parthian soldiers and the militia that fought against the Roman army. he was particularly worried about the Judean militia he had heard about, as he knew they despised him.

Antony's forces quickly swept all the way to Jerusalem before they faced any real or formidable defense. The garrisoned Parthian soldiers at Jerusalem fought valiantly but were hardly a match for the orchestrated attack of legions of the Roman army. Soon they were overwhelmed and thousands of Roman soldiers entered Jerusalem and killed anyone who was part of the government established by the Parthians except for King Antigonus who was captured alive. King Antigonus was then beheaded in a public spectacle and the Jewish inhabitants were compelled to accept the hated Herod again as their king.

However, Rome was not appeased by simply taking back what it lost. Antony did not stop in Judea but pushed his army beyond the Euphrates River into lands that had been controlled by the Parthian Empire for hundreds of years before their 40 B.C. invasion of Judea. His supply line grew ever longer as weeks turned into months of fighting, as Antony pushed his armies into what is now modern-day India. At that point, a great force of Parthian soldiers had finally rallied and now faced him.

When word had initially reached the capital of Parthia of the Roman attack in Judea, it took quite some time for its generals to

rally its armies from the far corners of its Empire. Some had cautioned against the initial Parthian invasion of the Roman territory of Judea. Now these voices counseled that Rome would not settle simply for the land it had previously held but would push further to 'teach Parthia a lesson'. This council proved correct as Antony's army moved beyond the Euphrates River. The ease Antony had in sweeping through Judea had fueled his hunger to take more land beyond the Euphrates River. He became over confident not considering that his supply chain was having increasing difficulty keeping up with his main fighting force as they plunged further beyond the Euphrates River.

After nearly a year of conflict, as 36 B.C. neared, the Parthian forces had finally been gathered and met the Roman legions commanded by Antony in what is now India. It then launched a devastating attack on the Roman army. It utterly crushed Antony's Roman legions and drove what remained of it back across the Euphrates River. It could have easily run the Roman army into the Mediterranean Sea and annihilated it. However, Emperor Phraates IV heeded the council his predecessor had ignored. He decided to allow the status quo of previous decades to return. Antony was thankful to have survived and quickly accepted the border bounded by the Euphrates River and other terms in a truce between Rome and Parthia.**13**

This peace agreement was to last from 36 B.C. to 58 A.D.**14** This period encompassed the years of the most important event since the creation of Adam. It set the stage for individuals whose lineage reached all the way back to King David to come together and form an extended family. This family would care for the young child who was born to not only be King of the Jews but King of Kings of all mankind as the end of the age neared. It would ensure that he would

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thrive and learn the lessons of life as a mortal so that he could die as the Savior of all mankind having been tested by every temptation known to man yet was without sin when he died on the cross. Many would see Him after He was resurrected as the first-born Son of YAHWEH then weeks later even more witnessed His ascension into the clouds returning to again sit on His throne at YAHWEH the Father's right hand until it was time for Him finally to return a second time to earth as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

It is in this time of peace between these two world superpowers of that day that certain individuals would become acquainted, be married, and their families would grow and prosper. Ultimately, the greatest event that had ever happened in the history of the entire Universe would take place beginning and ending in this land called Judea. There would be individual trials that nearly destroyed the hope of young love. There would be unimaginable spectacles of joy and glory at the birth of the Christ. Then came wonders as the Magi appeared presenting a fortune in gifts to the young child. Just as quickly, the couple and the young child had to flee into the night to keep the Christ from being killed by the soldiers of an evil king. **15**

However, this short summary jumps too far into the future. The details are too exciting to gloss over. So, let us really get to the heart and soul of this story by introducing a few very important individuals.

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## Chapter 4

### **Joseph of Arimathea Returns**

It had been over twenty years since Joseph of Arimathea began sailing across the Mediterranean Sea and beyond. The first fifteen years were with his father. Now, he was a full partner in the shipping and trading company that cooperated with the Roman government in supplying ore such as tin, iron, and copper for the furnaces that made weapons and large siege war machines for the vast Roman legions. he tried to remember exactly how long it had been since he had been home to visit with family and friends in Arimathea. Oh yes, it had been nearly five years this time. He was most anxious to see his nephew, also with the same name of Joseph in Nazareth. It seemed a bit odd he reminded himself again that his nephew was actually ten years older than he was. This provided a strange relationship as he and his nephew had grown up.

As he thought about the last twenty years, he felt that ‘strange’ was indeed an appropriate word for what he experienced with his nephew. Each time he returned to port and went to visit his nephew Joseph, while he could see in the mirror that he had grown older, when he looked at his nephew it looked as if he had hardly aged a day and if anything, he had grown younger. The wind and sun on a sailing ship must be harder on one’s looks than constructing homes and buildings of timber and masonry he reasoned. As the large ship made its way toward the dock at Joppa, his mind drifted back in time. He smiled as he began to remember something that happened way back when he was not quite four years old.

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As his mother had done many times before, they were again visiting relatives in the city of Nazareth. Joseph had met his relatives and discovered on the first visit that all the boys were quite a bit older than he was. They seemed to be nearly always gone when he along with his two sisters and baby brother and his mother stayed in a relative's home they were visiting.

One day he was walking down an alley between two rows of houses when suddenly, he was surrounded by half a dozen older boys. These boys began bullying him. One boy grabbed the leather bag from him that contained lunch for one of his cousins at the Tanakh school. Then another boy started looking into its contents. He tried to get it back but all he got for his efforts was being knocked down to the ground by two others. They held him down and began trying to find out if he had any coins, they could take away from him.

As he looked out from under two boys who were now sitting on top of him, he saw another even larger boy walking up to the group. Oh no, just when he thought things could not get any worst, now he would be pounded on by a giant. Before the bullies knew what was happening, this older boy had given them all a good thrashing. Finally, they had enough sense to run for their lives. Then the older boy took Joseph's hand, and started to raise him up. Joseph had already decided to stay on the ground afraid he would be next to get a whipping. The tug of war lasted less than a minute as Joseph could not resist the strength of the larger boy. He was surprised as he realized that he was being helped up in a kindly manner from this older boy who turned out to be his savior rather than another antagonist.

"Thank you, kind...uh... sir," Joseph said as he began to brush off the dust from his clothes.



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“What do you mean, SIR?” the older boy replied, “Don’t you recognize me?”

In the back of Joseph’s mind, after he had gotten a good look at the older boy, he thought the boy looked somewhat familiar, but he was not certain. “I usually call everyone bigger than myself, Sir. That just about includes everyone as I am quite small. Still, can’t go wrong that way. Can’t say I recognize you for sure, but I have a lot of dust in my eyes so I can’t see very well.”

“If you have enough sense to remember your own name then you should remember mine,” the older boy said with lowered eyebrows and a wrinkle across his forehead completing a frown on his face. Then the larger boy started beating the dust off the smaller boy’s clothes a bit more aggressive and Joe tried his best to put a name on the face of the much larger boy.

“Why, my name’s Joseph!” the younger boy blurted out as he began to cough from the dust coming out of his clothes. Then it suddenly became clear to him who had come to his rescue. “Joseph...Jossi...**JOSSI!**” he shouted out as his face formed a large smile from ear to ear. He wanted to grab him and give him a hug but he knew that would not go well with the older boy who was about ten years his senior. So, all he could think to do was grab and begin shaking his hand.

“That’s my name, don’t wear it out, Joe,” the older boy pulled his hand free but then his frown changed to a grin.

Since both boys had the same name, in private and most of the time when older folks were not around, the younger boy called the older boy, Jossi. The older boy called the younger boy, Joe.

“I haven’t seen you in a long time,” Joe, the younger Joseph said.

“Well, it’s not because I wasn’t here,” Jossi, the older Joseph replied.

“My father bought a house in Joppa and we have been staying there most of the time when we are not at our main home in Arimathea. He is off on a trip that will last a couple of years this time so my mother and I came here to Nazareth for the summer to visit family,” the younger Joseph explained.

“Must be fun living on the sea coast,” the older Joseph responded. “All I get to see is hills and buildings not to mention sawdust from sawn timber and rock dust from stones being chiseled flying about the workshop or the foundation and walls of another house or some other building my father is constructing.”

“But you at least are learning an important trade from your father,” Joe exclaimed.

“Sure, but that is not as exciting as learning about how to sail and seeing other ports across the sea,” Jossi replied.

“I’m sure that would be exciting, but, no; my father says I am much too small and too young to go to sea right now,” young Joe answered. “I can’t wait to grow up. My father says I might be able to sail with him in a few years if I start growing larger. Maybe when I am ten.”

“Well, I am way past that and I tell you what,” Jossi advised him, “Learning the carpentry trade is just a bunch of sweeping saw dust and rock dust, and getting grit in your eyes and mouth. Not to mention picking up pieces of wood and broken rocks that are not big enough to use in construction. Then there is digging trenches for footings and stepping and fetching for the older men. Yep, just fun all day long.”

“I don’t care if I have to wash the deck and dump the toilet buckets all day long, as long as I can go out to sea,” young Joe countered.

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“Oh, you can say that right now, but just wait and see. It will get old after a while and you will wish you were at home on solid ground and get to sleep in a warm bed and eat a good meal your mother makes instead of an old salty sailor who cooks fish twice a day in the galley,” older Jossi admonished.

Joe saw the leather bag that was taken from him lying on the ground. He picked it up and was glad to see that its content had not spilled.

“Where are you headed?” Joe asked.

“Got a message from my mother to take to the Rabbi at the Tanakh school,” Jossi answered.

“That’s where I am headed to deliver this bag with lunch for my cousin,” Joe remarked. “Can I walk with you?” Joe asked as he looked about to see if any of the bullies were still hanging around waiting for Jossi to leave.

“Of course,” Jossi told him as they began walking toward their destination.

They continued their conversation as they walked along to the Jewish Tanakh School. The younger Joseph dropped off lunch for one of his cousins. The older Joseph took the message from his mother to the Rabbi. After they had finished their tasks, they returned to Jossi’s home where they ate lunch together. The younger Joe discovered Jossi’s home was just a few minutes’ walk from the home he was staying at with his mother.

From that time on, they spent as much time as possible together when Joe came to Nazareth. Even though there was more than ten years difference in their ages, there was just something special between them. More than a bond as uncle and nephew, or even simply friends, they were as close as any two brothers could ever be.

It was always funny when they met someone they did not know, for the older Joseph to introduce the younger as ‘Uncle Joe’ but otherwise he called him ‘Joe’. The younger called the older one, who was his nephew, ‘Jossi,’ and almost never used the tag, nephew, unless it would bring a laugh.

When Joe had to go back to Arimathea or Joppa both missed each other terribly. It was easier on Jossi as he began to learn more carpentry skills as the family building trade grew. Joe spent a lot of time, as he grew older when he did not have to be at the Jewish Tanakh School; at the shipyard as the family stayed in Joppa when his father was not gone on a long voyage. He watched the tradesmen and ship builders as they built and repaired large sailing ships. He began to run errands for the men and to clean up after them. He remembered that was what Jossi said he had to do as he began to learn carpentry so that is what he thought he needed to do to learn about sailing.

While the trade winds were favorable, his father would be gone for six months to several years at a time before returning home for a few months and then back out to sea. During his father’s absence, when they knew it would be for a year or longer, his mother and his two sisters and young brother lived in their family house in Arimathea except when they visited family in Nazareth. The merchant business his father was in resulted in his family being what others would call fairly ‘well-to-do’ or wealthy. It also afforded them the means for visiting Nazareth on a regular basis, where they soon bought and maintained still another home besides the one in Joppa and their main ‘family’ home in Arimathea. Their new home in Nazareth would be used when visiting their kinfolk there. There

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were servants and caretakers who stayed at each house and several servants who went with the family to help in traveling.

They maintained a nice carriage for the family to ride in and a large wagon to carry their luggage and camping supplies. Trips between cities took several days to several weeks. Fortunately for travelers, Roman legions continually maintained security along well-traveled routes. Also, highwaymen and thieves were treated with severe punishment from beatings to losing body parts to tortuous death. Therefore, travel's worst elements were usually discomfort, boredom, and dust.

Joe's older sisters had no desire to become involved in the shipping and trading business. His younger brother began talking about extending his studies at the Tanakh School in order to become a rabbi. His sisters were content in developing skills and fine-tuning their looks to catch a good husband. Joe was the only one who wanted to follow in his father's shoes. That was his desire and overwhelming ambition in life from the time he first put his thoughts into words. He never forgot the first time his father had taken him to the dock in Joppa and then aboard the large sailing ship he commanded.

Joe did not get to go out sailing with his father when he was ten. In fact, he had long passed his twelfth birthday when his father surprised him by allowing Joe to accompanying him on a short trip to Cypress and back to Joppa. Then by the time, he reached eighteen he was sailing with his father to all ports in the Mediterranean Sea including the incredible port of Rome. On one trip to Carthage, he sat enthralled for hours as he listened to sailors from other ships talking about a wondrous land beyond the Pillars of Hercules clear on the other side of the world. He made up his mind right then that one day he would see that marvelous land.

Jossi continued to work with his family's construction business developing his carpentry skills to a level in which even his father was

quite impressed. He was as strong as any man he knew and smart as well. The business expanded and shortly after Jossi reached the age of thirty-five, he took over half the business and began to make a name for himself. He usually worked many hours each day but when Joe came to town, he left the work for his subordinates while he and Joe got together to fill each other in on what had been going on in their lives while apart.

## Chapter 5

### **The Day That Changed Their Lives**

While Jossi was usually quite serious, when Joe came into town it was like he was a kid again. When he did not say anything, Joe began to discover that Jossi was dreaming up something that was sure to end with them both laughing so hard their sides hurt. Yes, Jossi actually looked and acted as if he was ten to fifteen years younger than his actual age. When Jossi reached forty, everyone who did not know him would swear he was still in his twenties. As the years passed, when new people met them, Joe really liked it when others thought they were brothers. In the heat of many afternoons, they would cool off in a tavern drinking ale and other spirits and plan pranks just for fun. Nothing they did ever hurt anyone or caused serious damage to property but they sure got some people upset with them as they hightailed it away from situations and messed up scenes they caused that made them to laugh for hours afterwards.

Then came a day that would change their lives forever.

It was very hot that day. Just after the sun had reached its zenith, they had finished setting up a bucket of water on a high windowsill with a rope that ran next to a drain pipe down the wall and across the alley between two rows of buildings. The rope would trip the bucket if someone came along and did not lift their feet over the rope that was just a couple of inches off the ground. There were overhanging roofs that created a shadow over much of the alleyway so that a person walking down the alley would come out of the shadow into the bright sunlight and be upon the rope before their eyes adjusted. At least that was what the two planned would happen. They went up

an exterior stairway nearby and waited to see who would be splashed with the water. They were disappointed as several people had come along but had stepped over the rope and continued on their way.

Just when they were about to go down and trip the bucket of water on themselves to cool off, they saw a girl carrying a large basket full of freshly washed clothes coming down the alley. Neither wanted their trap to be sprung by a girl but before they could warn the girl, her foot caught on the rope and tripped the bucket. This caused her to fall down as the water spilled out upon her. As she was falling, her basket, and all its contents went flying in all directions. Immediately after hitting the ground, she rolled over and partially rose up and saw all her freshly washed clothes lying in the muddy water around her. Sitting in the dirt and mud, she put her hands over her face as she began to cry.

Jossi was the first to reach her. He said several times how sorry he was and kept asking, "Are you alright?" while he tried to help her up. Joe thought she would be as mad a wet hen and kept his distance to see what would happen. He expected Jossi would, at least, get a slap in the face and a chewing out by the girl.

"Oh, I guess I am all right, I think," the girl finally said between sobs as she got to her feet. She stood there wiping her tears, trying not to cry aloud, as she looked about at the clothes lying on the muddy ground, "I don't think anything is broken in me. Oh my, everything is dirty again and I had just got them all clean." She could not contain her sobs as tears again filled her eyes.

"I am so sorry," Jossi said again, "We never intended this would happen to a girl." He really felt bad that their prank had caused such a commotion and distress to this girl. Even though her sad face was covered with mud, her nose was red, and her eyes were full of tears, up close he saw that she was very beautiful. She sat the basket upright and began to pick up the soiled clothes. He commenced to



try helping her gather up the pieces of clothing that were now covered with mud formed from the dust and water and put them into the laundry basket.

“Now, everything will have to be washed again,” she sighed finally able to stifle any further crying.

Joe had also helped pick things up and ended up carrying the basket as the girl and Jossi began walking back toward the fountain where everyone washed their clothes.

“My name is Joseph,” Jossi said introducing himself to her.

“My name is Mary,” she responded with a smile.

From behind them, they heard a voice, “my name is Joseph too,”

“Both of you are named, Joseph?” she asked as she stopped and looked at both of them, “how do you know which of you is being spoken to?”

“Well, I just call him Joe and he calls me Jossi,” Jossi related.

“Apparently, you are not brothers as you would not both have the same name,” Mary stated and she saw them both shake their heads ‘No’, then she asked, “How did you come to know each other?”

“I am his uncle,” Joe answered first.

“What?” Mary said quite puzzled at the reply of the slightly younger looking man.

“Well, you see,” Jossi began, “my father’s father had two sons. The first son was my father born while my grandfather was a young man. When my father grew up, he married and they had me. About ten years after I was born my grandfather had another son and that’s him,” he said pointing to Joe.

“So, your father and Joe are brothers?” she said again smiling and nearly breaking out in a laugh at this odd paradox.

“You got it. He’s my Uncle Joseph,” Jossi replied.

“Yes, and he is my little nephew Jossi,” Joe retorted.

Both gave each other an angry serious looking scowl as their eyes locked onto each other. Mary thought they were really angry and might get into a fight. She did not know they were putting on an act.

“You boys settle down right now!” she demanded. “You both have a lot of clothes washing to do.”

“**What!**” they both said in unison and surprise turning from each other and now facing Mary.

“Exactly, you both are responsible for making a mess of my clean clothes and the only proper thing is for you both to help rewash them. And I mean it!” she said with finality crossing her arms in front of her and stomping her foot for added emphasis.

They both looked at each other and then at her. What a sight that would be. Two grown men at the fountain washing clothes with all the women there. However, regardless of their manhood, they wilted at the strength of Mary’s resolve. With Mary leading the way they reached the fountain and Joe dumped the clothes from the basket onto the ground at an empty spot next to the fountain. Then he and Jossi began taking the clothes to soak them in the water, dash them about, and wring them out as they saw the women doing about them to wash their clothes. The women around the fountain began to quietly snicker.

After seeing that they were not doing a very good job, Mary tried to show them how to properly wash the clothes. Trying to follow Mary’s example, soon the three of them were so engrossed with washing they did not notice a crowd was gathering about them. As they put the last pieces of clean clothes into the basket, they were startled as they heard a roar of cheering and applause from the large crowd that had unknowingly formed completely surrounding them. Sheepishly Jossi grabbed the basket of clothes as he and Joe began

trying to get away from the fountain before anyone would recognize them.

“Hey, you fellows will make fine wives one of these days,” Some man shouted out to them as they were almost running to escape the catcalls.

Joe wanted to stop and get into a brawl with any man who made wise cracks at their expense. Jossi had a cooler head and carried the basket for Mary while she made sure Joe did not respond to the taunts. They were soon away from the fountain and the crowd broke up and began wandering away getting back to their own concerns.

Just a little way past the spot in the alley where they had set up their prank, Mary turned to go to the left as both men started to turn to the right. Jossi told Joe that he would help Mary get the basket to her home and explain the delay and then meet back up with him at the tavern. Joe left them and continued to the right. It took another ten minutes for the couple to reach Mary’s house. It seemed a lot less as they had an enjoyable conversation along the way. Her mother and father were sitting on the front porch waiting for her.

“Uh Oh,” Jossi said to Mary as they turned a corner and he saw the reception party.

“Don’t worry,” she told Jossi. They took their time and slowly walked the remaining distance to the front porch.

“Hello Mother, Father,” she said casually and somewhat matter of fact, as they slowly walked up to the porch. “This nice man is Joseph. He was so kind as to help me after I stumbled and spilled the laundry on the ground in a dirty alley on my way home. The clothes were so dirty I had to rewash everything. This kind man helped me.”

“You helped her wash the clothes at the fountain?” Mary’s father asked in surprise and disbelief.

“I felt it was the least I could do as it was partially my fault she tripped and spilled the clothes basket,” Jossi answered. His answer sounded like he might have accidentally bumped into Mary so the two of them were the ones responsible for the accident. Jossi did not clarify that the other person at fault was not Mary.

“Well, that was a fine thing for you to do, Young man,” Mary’s mother said as she took the basket from Jossi. “Can you stay for dinner? We were just waiting for the room to cool down after cooking.”

“I would like that very much, that is if you have enough?” he replied catching a big smile from Mary as she was helping her mother with getting the basket of clothes into the house.

“I always cook enough for a couple extra mouths at my table. Just in case a stranger in need or a Messenger from Yahweh stops by,” Mary’s mother called out as she went into another room.

Jossi turned toward her father and saw him frowning. Jossi realized that he must have caught that smile on Mary’s face as well. Her father knew the meaning of that smile as much as Jossi did.

“What’s your family lineage and trade?” Mary’s father probed, as he did not waste time in beginning with his interrogation of a man that he saw his daughter had taken more than a casual interest in.

“My family is of the house of Judah. My father and I are carpenters by trade,” he responded.

“Are you a journeyman or apprentice?” the father continued.

“I am a journeyman and now in charge of half my father’s construction business,” he answered.

“My wife is of the tribe of Levi, but I am also of the tribe of Judah,” the father said as a smile appeared on this face for the first time, “good to have you share a meal at our table with us. I am mighty grateful for your kind help for our Mary. There are a lot of

young men now a days pulling pranks and leaving others with a lot of extra work. Glad you are not of that kind.”

“Yes sir, there’s enough work to do without others causing mischief,” Jossi said wiping some sweat from his forehead. He had right then and there determined that he would not be part of any more foolishness no matter how much fun it would be to see what happened. It simply was not fun if the prank happened to you or to some incredibly beautiful girl like Mary.

.....

Joe had continued toward the tavern after he had separated from Jossi and Mary. Arriving there, he had some ale as he settled into a booth in the back corner of the tavern where he and Jossi often sat passing time laughing and joking. After more than enough time had passed and still no Jossi, it suddenly dawned on him that what had taken place that afternoon was certainly going to change things. There was that funny look in Jossi’s eyes each time he looked at Mary and she had that same look in her eyes when she looked at Jossi. I’d say he is not in any hurry to get back here so I may as well go ahead and have my supper, Joe thought.

Sure, she was still just a girl and not really what he would call a woman, but he noticed she was already beginning to ‘blossom’ as his father would say. He remembered that sometimes, they would stand at the bow of his father’s ship looking down at the people walking along the wharf and he would notice young men and women walking along in pairs. His father would point at a girl that he saw was more ‘filled out’ and would say, “That one is blossoming”. It would still be a few years before Mary completely blossomed out but he had a feeling Jossi was going to file his ‘claim’ early. He

could not blame him for Mary was indeed the prettiest girl he had ever seen, except for his mother, of course.

Jossi finally arrived at the tavern a few hours later. Joe could see stars in his eyes and a dreamy disposition. Why, he was virtually sleepwalking. Jossi said he was already full as he had eaten supper at Mary's house and it was delicious.

"I'd say that that girl was what was delicious," Joe kidded.

"Don't you talk like that about Mary," Jossi said angrily. It was one of the very few times Joe had ever seen him flare up really angry, "she is the most decent and kindest person I have ever known." He not only frowned but also quickly turned and swiftly swung his hand to bat Joe on the back of his head causing him to spill some of his drink.

"Sorry," Joe retorted as he began to mop up the spilled ale with a napkin, "Don't be so sensitive. I was only kidding." After a few more minutes had passed in silence, he added, "So, you really like her?"

"She is wonderful," Jossi said as his frown turned back to a dreamy smile. He closed his eyes and slowly shook his head.

Joe could tell his nephew was seeing Mary in his mind's eye. Something told him Jossi would never be the same.

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That was about ten years ago, Joe remembered. As his thoughts moved to the present. During those ten years, he had taken his own ship on three voyages to several ports along the North African coast and other ports in the Mediterranean Sea. Plans were underway by his father's shipping company with the Roman government to become involved with their tin mining in some Isle in the North Sea

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called Briton. That would require him to be away for longer stints from his childhood homes in Arimathea and Joppa and the wonderful times he spent with his nephew, Jossi, in Nazareth.

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## Chapter 6

### **Mary and Elisabeth**

Mary could hardly wait to see her cousin, Elisabeth, who lived in the city of Juttah, just south and less than half a day's journey from Jerusalem. Even though Elizabeth was actually older than Mary's mother was, she was always so bubbly and full of life that she behaved like a young girl when Mary came for a visit. She had been married for many years, but she had no children. The cousins always shared their wildest dreams and fancies with each other. Nazareth was such a long way from Juttah that Mary usually only saw Elisabeth once or twice each year. Both of their families went to Jerusalem each spring for Passover and again most of the time in the fall during the Feast of Tabernacles.

Mary's father was of the tribe of Judah. However, Mary's mother was of the tribe of Levi as well as her mother's sister who married a man of the tribe of Levi. This was important for Elisabeth's Zacharias was not only of the tribe of Levi, he was of the lineage of Aaron. For him to be a priest who served in the Temple at Jerusalem, he was required to marry a woman of the tribe of Levi as well. While most of the time Zacharias' responsibilities were routine in the outer courts of the Temple, sometimes they were much more important and involved service in the inner court.

During her parents visit with their kinfolk in Juttah, every chance when Mary could slip away, she would go over to Elisabeth's house nearby. There, they would sit on Elisabeth's bed as they talked and laughed on into the night when Zacharias, Elisabeth's husband was away performing his responsibilities at the Temple in Jerusalem.

Mary told Elisabeth that she had become quite fond of a handsome young carpenter she had met in Nazareth. He had begun to often find excuses to stop by her home and help her father fix something around the house. Elisabeth then told Mary about the joy she and her husband shared being together. She was quite proud of him and every time they visited together, she reminded her that he was a descendent of the family of Aaron and served in the Temple as if she had never told Mary in their previous visits. Mary did not mind as she could tell how very important this was to Elisabeth. During this visit, Zacharias was staying in a room at the Temple in Jerusalem until his course of duty was completed.

“I have never loved a man other than Zacharias,” Elisabeth proudly exclaimed, “He is a leader and no matter how busy he is, he always finds time to see that I have anything I need to keep house. He never complains even when I burn the stew in the pot in the fireplace because I spent too much time in the garden looking after my flowers or visiting others especially those who are sick or alone with no spouse or children.”

“Is it hard not having any children?” Mary asked with sympathy expressed in her voice and on her face.

“I have long ago accepted my fate,” Elisabeth said. “If it were Yahweh’s will I would have children. But, since I don’t, I make time to visit others who seem to have more children than they know how to take care of.”

“What’s your carpenter’s name?” Elisabeth asked Mary.

“Joseph,” Mary answered, “He is so strong and he can build anything. I used to wish my father had also been like Zacharias so he could have been a priest so we would live near Jerusalem instead of him being a shepherd and keeping flocks of sheep on the outskirts of Nazareth. But now I am very happy we live in Nazareth.”

“Or you would not have met Joseph,” Elisabeth surmised.

“You would not believe how we met?” Mary laughed and began telling her about getting soaked and spilling her basket of freshly washed clothes. Elisabeth broke out laughing and could not stop as Mary told her how she made the men rewash the clothes at the fountain.

“Oh no,” she laughed, “No way could you get a man to wash clothes at the fountain.”

“Oh yes I did!” Mary stated empathically, “I taught them a lesson they’ll never forget.”

“Well, if anyone could do that, I guess it would be you,” Elisabeth affirmed. “What was the name of the other man?”

“His name was also Joseph,” Mary then explained how they were related having to pause ever now and then to laugh. “The younger called the older, my little nephew. I wanted to laugh but then I thought they were about to fight. It was just an act. Those two were full of foolishness. But, that lesson at the fountain washing clothes just might have straightened them out for good.” She and Elisabeth took off in another round of laughter until they changed the subject to talk about other things.

Each woman had had strong mothers who taught them to always act proper and do what was right before Yahweh. While girls do not attend the Jewish Tanakh School as young men did, their mothers taught them every day about the truths of Yahweh. They had learned that their people were remnants of the once great nation of Israel, they were Yahweh’s people. Most of their people still felt they were a special people even though others controlled their land. They were taught of the prophecies of the Torah and those of many ancient prophets that someday the Christ would come and free Yahweh’s people, and they would again become a mighty nation.

Mary told of her hopes and dreams that one day she would have a good husband as Elisabeth had. Time passed too quickly as each visit came to an end. They said their goodbyes as Mary joined her parents and began their journey back to Nazareth. Mary hated to leave Elisabeth but at the same time was anxious to return so she could see the young carpenter again. Young, she mused, he is nearly twenty years older than I am. Nevertheless, one could not tell his real age from looking at him and most thought he was at least ten to fifteen years younger than he was. She knew he had more vitality than most young men that were half his age. Yes, he will be my husband one of these days; she finally made up her mind.

The trip back to Nazareth seemed to take a much longer time than the trip down to Juttah. They had hardly unpacked from the journey when a knock sounded at the door. There stood Joseph, Mary's carpenter. He had a very serious look on his face and asked to speak with her father. Her father came out and hardly pausing at the door said over his shoulder that he needed to check on his sheep. Together they walked away from the house and out to the field where the sheep grazed.

They had walked in silence and after seeing that the sheep were doing well Mary's father stopped and turned to Joseph and said, "Well, what is it that you have to say?"

"You are wise enough to see that I am very fond of your daughter, Mary," Joseph began, "We have known each other for nearly ten years. I am now ready and able to do what I have longed to do since I first met her. Truth is I have been terribly miserable while she has been gone with you on your trip to Jerusalem and to Juttah. Each time she goes away, it is like my life stops and has no purpose. I have come to realize that my life is not just incomplete, it is

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unbearable without her. I would like to ask for her hand in marriage.”

“I knew the first day you came to our home that there was something going on between you two,” Mary’s father acknowledged, “I know her mother will want to plan a proper wedding and have family come in from as far away as Jerusalem and beyond. That will take time.”

“Then I have your approval and blessing?” Joseph said breathlessly.

“Of course,” he answered, “What took you so long?”

Joseph did not answer him. He began whooping, jumping about, and then tore off running back to the house. Mary was standing in the doorway and had been watching her father and Joseph as they walked out to the field where the sheep were grazing. Suddenly, she saw him as he began to jump up and down and start running toward the house. Her mother was standing behind her and put her arms around her.

“Well, it looks like your young man has finally got up the nerve to ask your father for your hand in marriage,” she said lovingly.

“It’s about time,” Mary said with a shudder as she realized what this meant. “Do you think I am ready?”

“As ready as you will ever be,” her mother told her giving her a strong hug and then let her go while giving her a slight push as Mary ran from the doorway toward Joseph.

They met in the street and both stopped at arm’s length and just stood for a moment silently looking at each other.

“Mary,” Joseph breathlessly spoke first, “I never want another day to pass without you being with me. Mary, I love you with all my heart, soul, and being.”

“Joseph,” Mary smiled as she replied, “I have loved you from the first time I saw you.”

“Even though I dowsed you with water and caused you to spill your basket of clothes?” he said in wonder.

“The way you came to my aid, confessed your prank, and then went and helped rewash the clothes as I demanded, told me that you are an honorable man who would do anything for me,” she said as tears of joy began to form in her eyes.

He reached out the same time as she did and they held each other’s hands as they stood looking into each other’s eyes for just a moment. Then his arms wrapped around her and hers wrapped around him as they embraced but briefly. As much as they yearned to hold onto each other forever, their upbringing taught them to always be circumspect. They could not forget that they were on a public road and Mary’s father and mother were within eyesight as well as others in the houses nearby. They turned and began walking back toward Mary’s house. Mary reached out and took Joseph’s hand in hers. Her outward sign of affection initially embarrassed him. Nevertheless, he hardly hesitated to turn his hand around to take hers into his own strong grip. She was his and no one would ever take her from him.

## Chapter 7

### A Meeting in the Third Heaven

The remnant of Israel had been taught by Moses and the prophets that their God was Elohim. This uni-plural word means more than one in a family of Deities. Elelohey or ***Yahweh*** is the Eternal's Hebrew name though in many translations where you see the word LORD in all capitals refers to YHWH pronounced ***Yahweh***, or as you read in the KJV, God Almighty. He has a throne in the third heaven with another throne on His right hand. On this throne, sits ***Yeshua*** [most Christians know as Jesus]. Another Deity called the Holy Spirit was also present but this Deity does not have the form of the other two. There has been confusion among many of the world's religions concerning these Deities. Israel was taught that their Yahweh was one.

***Hear, O Israel: Yahweh our Elohim, is Yahweh echad!***  
(Deuteronomy 6:4; Hebrew Roots Bible, [HRB])

[This verse called “The Great Shema” because “Hear O Israel” means to listen or be attentive to. The Hebrew word “***echad***” is a unity word such as family, see Gen 2:24, and means “***Yahweh united***”. If the intention of the verse was to show there was only one deity or ***Yahweh***, the last Hebrew word used would have been “***yachid***”, see Gen 22:12.]

Adding to this confusion is the fact that ***Yahweh*** and ***Yeshua*** [Jesus] often share the same names and in some translations such as the Hebrew Roots Bible, KJV, and NKJV you will find the following passage.

*6 For unto us a Child is born; to us a Son is given; and the government is on His shoulder; and His name is called Wonderful Counselor, The Mighty El, The Prince of Peace, the [One] who Fathered Everlasting life. 7 There is no end to the increase of His government and of peace on the throne of David, and on His kingdom, to order it, and to sustain it with justice and with righteousness,*

*(Isaiah 9: 6-7 Hebrew Roots Bible)*

*6 For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of His government and peace There will be no end,*

*(Isaiah 9:6 - 7 NKJV)*

[The nature of the Godhead is more thoroughly explained in the first book I have written and recently published: ***The Story of the New Immortals: Part 1; The Beginning of the Beginning*** However, specific aspects will be repeated for readers who have not read that book.]

What is nearly impossible for man to understand is the fact that ***Yahweh*** (the Heavenly Father) and ***Yeshua*** (Jesus Christ the Son), as well as the ***Holy Spirit*** are so absolute and perfect in unison of mind and unity of purpose that they are virtually one in all they think and do. To address one is to address the others. To speak of one is to speak of the others. Notice in the above scriptural passage this prophecy of the Christ, who was to be the ***Son of Yahweh*** would also be called '***the Everlasting Father***' in the KJV and NKJV; but in the Hebrew Roots Bible



that portion of the phrase is translated '***The one who Fathered Everlasting life***'. Together, They have lived for eternity and reigned supreme over all that exists for They have created it and by the Holy Spirit, have not only brought it into being but have sustained it.

.....

***"I cannot ask you to do this," Yahweh*** said with great trepidation.

***"You are not asking," Yeshua*** assured Him, ***"I have purposed this from the foundation of the world should the man we created fail and commit sin."***

***"It has been such a struggle for mankind on earth all these years," Yahweh*** thought aloud, ***"I had such hope when Abraham responded to Our call."***

***"Oh Yes, My friend Abraham," Yeshua*** also reminisced, ***"Of all those who have called upon Our name, he has always been most faithful. I can still see him crossing and re-crossing from one end to the other, the land we promised him and his heirs."***

***"There are so few of them now left in the land they call Palestine. So many remain scattered out throughout the entire earth," Yahweh*** grimaced as He gazed upon the land that was given to Abraham, ***"The nation of Israel was always so stubborn, and followed their kings up and down the path of righteousness. For a while in faithful obedience to us and then in idolatry like frogs hopping across hot rocks. Up and then down, up and then down. Over and over."***

***"Israel should have become and remained, a beacon to the entire world," Yeshua*** declared, ***"shinning out the light of truth. Proving to all the immeasurable blessings, We pour out good things and blessings to those who follow Our way, obey us, and worship us***

*rather than gods made with their own hands and minds. That kingdom should have stood even until this very day.”*

*“I have watched the wanderings of the northern ten tribes who had forsaken Us long before the Southern tribe of Judah. They, who in judgment were carried off by the Assyrians many earth-years ago,” Yahweh recalled. “Since that time, they have become separated. Some migrated into Asia and others have begun to move beyond the lands near the North Sea toward the Atlantic Ocean. Several tribes remained together and have again developed into two very strong empires. One is called Scythia but it is the other that has caught my attention. It is called Parthia and had fought the Romans to a stalemate a few decades ago. The River Euphrates now marks the line of truce between the empires of Rome and Parthia.”<sup>16</sup>*

*“That reveals the remarkable achievements of all the sons of Jacob. I have also been very interested in following the southern two tribes that formed Judah,” Yeshua added. “They also became so corrupt and sinful that I had Babylon invade and take them into captivity. Yet, there were numerous individuals that remained faithful to Us. I finally allowed some of them to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the city and Temple. Over the last several hundred years I have witnessed the return to Palestine of remnants of all the twelve tribes, thirteen if you count the two sons of Joseph, Manasseh and Ephraim, as two tribes.”*

*“Are you sure the time is right?” Yahweh asked.*

*“Since the Tower of Babel, there has been no other time in which so many people of earth’s population understand one language,” Yeshua replied. “While Rome conquered much of the western civilization, the spoken language of the people of most of that empire was and remains Greek rather than Latin. Local communities in Galilee and Judea often use Aramaic and the Hebrew language of*

*their ancestry but nearly all understand and speak some Greek, as it is the 'commercial' language among all the nations surrounding the Mediterranean Sea and even beyond. Even Asian nations of eastern civilizations are acquainted with it enough to bargain with traders who follow the trade routes by land and sea across the face of the world."*

***"But, are the people ready?" Yahweh questioned further. "Who of all the living is worthy to become part of this great event?"***

*"The lineage of the house of David has been promised to Our prophets on earth since David was king, that it would be the host as I tabernacle with man," Yeshua answered. "I have closely watched many young women for hundreds of years. Now, I have found one unlike all the others who will fulfill the prophecies. She is a virgin betrothed to a very devote man who also is of the tribe of Judah. I have found her heart is pure and kind and she has the mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual metal to endure all that this calling will require."*

***"Do you fully realize what You are doing?" Yahweh's voice could hardly sound His words. "If You fail...there is no hope, no redemption, for mankind as well as Yourself."***

*"With your help and the help and power of the Holy Spirit," Yeshua declared. "I will not fail!"*

***"Very well," Yahweh acquiesced, "Talk with Gabriel and Michael and set Our plans in motion."***

How strange, ***Yahweh*** thought. Soon I will be alone. However, ***Yeshua*** will also be alone as He becomes human. We both will experience existence so radically different than We have ever known it. ***Yahweh*** knew that the human mind from its inception of life as the male sperm merges with the female egg is nearly a blank slate. Attributes of both of its parents take years to develop and reveal the

character of the new life that has been formed. By the power of the Holy Spirit ***Yahweh*** would transform ***Yeshua*** into a male sperm and impregnate one of the woman's eggs. ***Yahweh*** wondered how long it would take before ***Yeshua*** as a male child that was to be born from this event would realize his parentage of ***Yahweh*** as His Father as well as the young woman as His mother. How long until ***Yeshua*** again grasps that He is ***Elohim*** [God] as well as man.

.....

In another chamber outside of the throne room, ***Yeshua*** met with the Great Archangels Gabriel and Michael.

*"The event I have told you about will soon take place," Yeshua* announced to them.

*"The birth of mankind's Messiah, the Christ, you are about to go to the earth?"* Michael ventured.

*"How soon?"* asked Gabriel.

*"Very soon," Yeshua* answered. *"There is much to do. Once I complete My part of this event, I will not be able to communicate with you for some time so anything I need to do must be done now and quickly."*

*"There are several men to the east that have faithfully worshipped the true Elohim and have prayed to see this event take place in their lifetime. Can I go to them and tell them that their prayers will soon be answered?"* Michael requested.

*"Yes, the Magi of the Parthians," Yeshua* acknowledged. *"Yes, go to them. You will guide them as a star in the heavens. They have been looking for that star to appear for many centuries. It will take a while for them to prepare but when they are ready, lead them to me."*

“But there is not enough time for them to make it in time for the birth of man’s Savior,” Michael said with a perplex look.

“Do not worry,” **Yeshua** assured him, “*they will arrive at the right time. What they bring is very important. In fact, it is a matter of life and death in the early years of my human life as well as providing the means of supporting what I must do during my last few years on earth.*” In **Yeshua**’s mind He prophetically saw the beginning and end of His physical life. This caused Him to shudder.

“My Lord, are you alright?” asked Michael.

“Yes, I just do not know which is the most perplexing. The beginning or the end of this new life I will be living,” **Yeshua** answered and then smiled.

“What can I do?” Gabriel asked.

“You have several very important tasks to do,” **Yeshua** began, “*I need you to be a very special messenger. You will be speaking to my future mother, her cousin’s husband and my mother’s future husband who will be my earthly father. Here is the time table in which these events will play out.*” **Yeshua** handed him a scroll and continued to talk with them a while longer. Then He returned to His throne to sit at **Yahweh**’s right hand.

“*Is everything ready for this event to take place?*” **Yahweh** asked.

“As much as possible,” **Yeshua** responded. “What will be difficult for nearly everyone who has yearned for this event to take place in their lives will be to understand and accept that My coming this first time is as a lamb for the greatest sacrifice ever to take place. Sad to say, most of the Jews are expecting Me to come this time as King of Kings throwing off the bondage of Rome and restoring Israel to greatness. Many will not understand and will be offended.”

**Yahweh** shuddered as He said, “*I still do not know how I can sit back and allow you to be murdered.*”

*“You know that this must be done from start to finish,” Yeshua replied, “Before I can claim My throne on earth as King of Kings and Lord of Lords, I must face Satan as a man just like every other person who has ever lived. I must not only overcome his attacks on me but the tests every human has faced from birth to death since their father Adam was created. I cannot sit in righteous judgment over the entire human race unless I have walked in their shoes. Mankind has a destiny... and so do I.”*

## Chapter 8

### Zacharias and Elisabeth

As he had done many times before, Zacharias donned his priestly robes. His path took him through the outer court of the Temple where there were many people who were bowed down humbly pouring out their prayers and supplications to Yahweh. They did not speak to him as they watched him passing by for, they knew his mission. For the first time in his life he continued by himself into the inner court of the Temple and began his preparation at the altar of incense. This honor was bestowed on the priests of Yahweh only one time in their lives and this was his time.

Just as the incense began to burn and create smoke, in the corner of his eyes, he caught a glimpse of someone standing to the right side of the altar. No one but him should be there. Then, he realized that this was no ordinary man. From the radiance of his countenance that caused his body to glow, he saw immense wings slowly moving back and forth.

Zacharias was well versed in the oral history of the Temple. He knew the duties of the priesthood and how well the other priests served there. He knew that some had drawn Yahweh's wrath for desecrating their office and the rites performed within the inner courts of the Temple. Those met a grim fate and death took them. Any that had doubts had a rope tied to their leg so if struck dead they could be pulled out. Zacharias refused to allow a rope to be put on his leg. Now, as his knees began to shake his mind ran through his past thoughts and actions. Where had he failed, where had he overlooked any offense, he might have committed and thereby been unworthy of entering the inner court. He was on the verge of collapsing to the floor when he heard the voice of the stranger.

“Do not fear, Zacharias,” the angel Gabriel said to him, “Your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elisabeth shall bear you a son and you shall name him, John. He will be no ordinary man as he shall be a great man in the sight of Yahweh. During his life, he shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He shall be filled with the Holy Spirit while still in his mother’s womb. Many of the children of Israel will turn to the Lord their Yahweh because of this man. He shall go before the Christ in the spirit and power of Elijah to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just. He will make ready a people for the coming of the Christ.”

Zacharias was stunned. His mind was lost in thought to the extent that the announcement that the Christ would soon come was blotted out. His wife would soon bear him a son! Shocked and confused he blurted out his thoughts, “How can this be? I am an old man and my wife is well beyond the age of childbearing.”

The angel smiled and looked full into Zacharias’ face and declared, “I am Gabriel; I stand in the very presence of Yahweh Almighty as I stand before you this day. I have been sent to speak to you and reveal to you these glad tidings. Because you still do not believe my words and to prove to you that this is the word of Yahweh that I have spoken unto you, until the day your wife shall bring forth your son you shall be dumb and unable to speak.”

Having thus spoken, the angel disappeared from his sight and he gasped but no sound came from his lips. He finished completing his task and then he slowly made his way out. As he left the inner court and entered the outer court, he found a mass of people surrounding the doorway and there was a mummer and astonished look upon their faces. He heard them talking and asking each other as to why it had



taken the priest so much longer to burn the incense than it usually took.

Zacharias tried to explain what had happened but no words would leave his mouth. He began to gesture to them outlining shapes with his hands, pointing to others, then pointing upward, and bowing his head. Soon, the people began to say that he had seen a vision in the Temple and try as he could none could understand further the substance of what took place in the inner court other than Zacharias had been visited by an angel and had been struck dumb, as he could no longer speak.

When his time of service was completed, Zacharias returned to his home in Juttah to be with his wife, Elisabeth. She met him at the door and brought him some water to drink as he entered and sat down at the table. Word of his dilemma of not being able to speak had already come to her from several who knew them and were actually at the Temple when Zacharias had come out of the inner court days before.

“In all of Israel no finer man has served in the Temple of our Yahweh,” Elisabeth said to him with great pride and thankfulness. He tried to speak but no sound came out. Then he made gestures to her to bring him a parchment and a pen. She returned with these things and sat down at the table beside him as he began to write. She read each of his words as they appeared on the parchment.

“An angel... Gabriel! He came from Yahweh to speak to you!” She exclaimed in excitement. “We are to have... a son? A son? Us? You and I? How can this be? Oh, I am sorry. Perhaps Yahweh will strike me dumb as well for my reaction to His words. Oh Zacharias, we have waited so long, so long it is as if we are beyond hope. Nevertheless, we must remember Sarah and Abraham. They were much older than we are and yet Yahweh fulfilled His promise to

them. While our Lord had not promised us a son until now, I now believe His word. Zacharias, we will have a son. Our child, our son what a great man he shall be. You were told that he would be preparing the way for the Christ! The prophecies are about to be fulfilled. Oh my! The Christ is soon to come! Oh, my Yahweh, we are so unworthy for such an honor to bear His messenger who will proclaim the coming of the Christ.”

Zacharias put his arm around Elisabeth and his tears of joy were added to those of his wife. Zacharias remained at home and rarely went out except to accompany Elisabeth to the market to purchase vegetables and meat for their meals. As time passed, there were less and less of people trying to get him to speak. Some had tried pranks to see if his condition was real or pretended. While this was annoying, he felt his vitality becoming more invigorating and noticed more of a spring in Elisabeth’s step as well. In a few months’ she told him that she was with child. He did not want others to bother her so as she began to show her pregnancy, he did the shopping at the market by himself using a list of items they needed.**17**

## Part Two: The Conception of the Christ

*$\mathcal{R}$  of  $\mathcal{D}$*

## Chapter 9

### **Mary has an Unexpected Visitor**

Mary continued to be excited as the time approached in which she would become Joseph's wife. The tradition of the Jews was such that when a man and a woman became betrothed, they were considered as already husband and wife. However, they were required to not consummate the marriage until after the wedding feast. If for any reason, the marriage was broken during this time, a bill of divorcement was required to break the union. This never entered the minds of Mary or Joseph after the engagement was announced.

Almost daily, Mary went through the things she had set aside for the day she married. They were important things a wife needed in order to tend to a home, a husband, and children. The last two items always brought a blush on her cheeks. Oh, she loved her carpenter so much. Even when he came by to see her all covered with saw dust and grit and sweaty from laboring all day completing his toils, she would embrace him with joy and happiness ever grew in her heart.

He was building a house they would occupy after the wedding ceremony and feast officially made them husband and wife. He wanted it to be a surprise but several times, she could not resist and slipped over to the building site and looked it over. Often, he had talked with her about the house wanting to know how she would like it arranged. One day after describing the kitchen to her, she told Joseph that his layout would not be good. It needed more room in this area and less room in that area, she explained. She noticed that his brow furrowed into a frown but quickly returned to the smile it usually had when they were together.

The next day when she climbed a tree and took a peek at the house being built, she could see Joseph tearing out a wall. She could not make out his exact words as he talked to himself but she could tell his words were not very happy. He continued to fuss a bit longer until the wall was down and then he began to move the lumber and started nailing them back together and soon the wall was back up configuring the kitchen to be according to the way Mary had told him she wanted the evening before. That done, his smile returned and she heard him whistling a tune.

That night she smiled ever thankful of Yahweh's blessing to her as she lay in the bed in her room at her parent's house. She had just drifted off to sleep. Something caused her to suddenly wake up. Even before she opened her eyes, she could see through her eyelids that the room was brightly lit. She did not remember leaving any candles burning as she wondered if it was already day time. She slowly opened her eyes and peeked out from under the blanket that covered most of her head. Her eyes widened in great surprise to see at the foot of her bed what had at first glance appeared to be a man. Instantly, she realized this was not a mortal man but an angel. She sat up and as His countenance glowed, she saw that he was suspended in the air several feet above the floor of her bedroom. He had large wings that slowly swept back and forth. The smile on his face caused her to relax.

"Greetings," the angel began to announce, "All hail for you are most highly favored for the Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women."

Mary was astonished more at his words than the fact that an angel had appeared to her. While his appearance was simply incredible, his words troubled her greatly. 'Why had he addressed me,' she

thought, ‘in such exalted terms? I am just the only daughter of a poor shepherd.’

Before she could find her voice to express her questions the angel spoke again, “Do not fear Mary for you have found favor with Yahweh. Behold, tonight, you shall conceive in your womb a son. You shall call his name Jesus. He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Highest. The Lord Yahweh shall give unto him the throne of his father David. He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever and of his kingdom there shall be no end.”

Mary then remembered that the angel’s words were mentioned in one of the books of the prophets. Her mother told her of the scroll that promised the coming of Messiah, the Christ to be King over Judah and Israel. As she turned these words over in her mind, one thing stood out in her mind.

“How can this happen tonight for I have never been with a man and my future husband is far away?” She asked.

“As soon as I leave this room, the Holy Spirit of Yahweh will come to you and you will feel the power of Yahweh as it covers and encompasses you and then enters your body. The child that is formed within your womb shall be called the Son of Yahweh. Behold, your cousin Elisabeth has already conceived a son in her old age. She who was called barren is now in her sixth month with child. For with Yahweh nothing shall be impossible,” Gabriel announced to her.

Mary sighed and bowed her head as she prayed to Yahweh for understanding and His mercy. That Yahweh would help her always to serve Him with all her heart, soul, mind, and body. Then she looked into the angel’s eyes, “Behold, the handmaid of Yahweh; be it unto me according to your word.”

With that being said, the angel, Gabriel disappeared and she found herself alone. **18** As the afterglow of the angel faded, Mary lay back

down in her bed. Then a glowing cloud appeared to come through the ceiling and descended down upon her and then she felt it enter her body. She began to feel a warm rushing sensation throughout her body. It was the strangest feeling she had ever experienced. Then she placed her hands over her abdomen. Her thoughts were a prayer to Yahweh that she would be all that Yahweh needed her to be to bring His Son into the world. A miracle had just happened as by the power of the Holy Spirit, Yahweh had changed Yeshua into a tiny cell that attached to one of Mary's eggs in her womb. Then the glowing cloud rose from her and again passed through the ceiling and the room again was dark. Mary quickly fell into a deep restful sleep.

Mary remained in her home and hardly went out for several weeks after that night. She needed time to think. She was glad that Joseph was out of town. He had sent word that he had to travel out of town and would be gone for two or possibly three weeks to arrange a very large shipment of stone and many wagons of timber to a new construction site where he was to build a large home for a very successful merchant on the outskirts of Nazareth.

Then one evening, there was a knock on her bedroom door and her mother told her that Joseph had returned and was at the front door. He had not entered the house because he was still covered with dust and grime from his trip and while he was desperate to see her, he did not want to mess up their home. She had dreaded the thought of telling him about what had happened to her. Would he understand and accept this because it was from their Yahweh? On the other hand, would he act like most men and go crazy thinking their loved one had been unfaithful?

It was with a heavy heart that Mary wrapped in a blanket because it was cool outside, opened the door, and there stood Joseph. He



stopped shivering as a smile filled his face and he warmed up as soon as he saw Mary. Before he could speak, Mary took his hand and led him away from the house. He was surprised but could see on Mary's face that something was on her mind and that she wanted to be alone with him. After walking into the field past the flock of sheep her father tended, she led him to a clump of trees. Under a large tree that had lost its leaves, she sat down with him at her side. She pulled the blanket tightly around her but still shivered as she tried to speak. It was not the cool air that caused her shivers but the task she had to complete. Joseph sat breathlessly waiting for her to speak. Something inside told him that what she had to say was very important and that he should wait and give her time to say it.

"Joseph," she began, "I am not sure how to begin. But something has happened that I must tell you about."

He had never seen such a desperately serious look on her face nor had she ever had such difficulty finding her words. Joseph tried to assure her, "It is all right, Mary. You can trust me. What is this all about?"

"Do you really love me?" she asked, as she looked pleadingly into his eyes.

"Yes, yes, Mary," he answered without pause, "With all my heart."

"Do you trust me to tell you only the truth?" she asked, searching his face.

"Yes, Mary," he assured her. "Never have you spoken an untruth to me or anyone else that I am aware of."

"Joseph," she said her voice was low and unsteady, "an angel, the archangel Gabriel, came to me a few weeks ago while you were out of town."

Joseph started to speak but she put her hand over his mouth so she could get the words out before she lost her determination to tell him.

“Please, this is very hard, let me finish while I am able. The angel, Gabriel told me that, that,” she halted trying to find the right words, “That I was to be visited that very night by the power of Yahweh. The Holy Spirit was to come upon me. It would enter my body and I would conceive a child. A son. I... am... to... bear... the Son of Yahweh within my body. I am to name him, Jesus. Oh Joseph... can you accept this? I ...am... with child.”

At first, Joseph was speechless as he rose to his feet. His mind had scrambled what Mary had said to him. All he had heard and could think of is that his precious Mary, his betrothed, was with child and he was not the father. He just could not grasp what she said about the angel.

“Are you sure you are with child?” his voice asked trembling as he looked down at her. “It has only been a few weeks since we last saw each other. How is it possible for this to happen and for you to know in such a short time? How can you be absolutely sure?”

“I am positive,” Mary answered, “that I am with child.”

“Mary, if you have been raped by another man, it would not change a thing. I would still love you,” Joseph suggested as he tried to understand what Mary had just told him.

“Joseph, listen to me,” Mary said clearly. “No man has forced me. What is going on in my body is of our Yahweh. Yahweh’s messenger, the archangel Gabriel, told me the Holy Spirit of Yahweh would cause me to conceive a son.”

“Angel, messenger of Yahweh, I have never heard of Yahweh causing a woman to be with child. I just cannot understand what you are telling me. I have never heard of such a thing.” His mind chaotically raced and he did not realize he was talking aloud, “What must a man do under this circumstance? What am I supposed to do

when my wife-to-be is carrying someone else's child?" Joseph was exasperated. His mind simply was not working. He could not face this situation as he was on the verge of having a nervous breakdown. He even forgot that Mary was with him.

He looked up into the sky for a long time. Then he closed his eyes and slowly shook his head. He cried out incoherently as he struck the tree with such force with his fists, he knocked some bark off. In all his life, he had never felt as he did at that moment. The woman he loved with all his being had told him the one thing he could never have thought was possible. She was with child and he was not the father. He felt sick, nauseated, his mind was spinning as he fell against the tree trunk. He grabbed hold of the tree to keep from falling. He began to cry out loud as he felt like all his strength was leaving his body. He felt as if he were going to pass out. He did not even notice that Mary was sitting by the tree near him as he cried out bitterly even screaming as a person might do if they were having a leg cut off without anything to diminish the pain.

Mary had sat silently for some time as she watched Joseph's reaction to her words. He continued to wrench his head side to side. He cried out incoherently with bitter sobs and occasionally screamed out words that had meaning, "No, no, Oh my Yahweh, NO!"<sup>19</sup>

Finally, Mary could take no more. She silently rose to her feet and started walking away. She paused and looked back at Joseph. There was nothing more she could do or say to him. He was in utter shock. She felt that he needed to be left alone to sort things out. In time, she felt in her heart that he would accept things as she had told him. However, for now he needed time alone. By the time she reached the road, when she looked back, she saw that Joseph had also left and was no longer under the tree where she had sat talking with him. She could not see where he had gone.

$\mathcal{R}$  of  $\mathcal{D}$

## Chapter 10

### **Mary visits Elisabeth**

Mary went on back to her parent's house. She had thought that Joseph might be upset at this news but she was not prepared that he would react so violent and extreme and lose control of his emotions as he did. In all the years they had known each other, he had never totally lost control of himself like he had just done.

When she entered the house, her parents took turns asking her where was Joseph and what was going on as they could see that she was very upset. Finally, she broke down and after crying for a while began to tell her parents about the visit by the angel Gabriel and what had happened to her. Each asked her questions that she was able to answer. At first her father was quite upset that this had happened to his daughter. He asked her specifically if Joseph had taken advantage of her and she was now carrying his child. She told him absolutely this had not happened and the child's father was Yahweh as she had said before. Then he was upset with Joseph for running out on his Mary. Mary tried to get her father to not be upset at Joseph as she felt assured that in time, he would accept what had happened and would stand by her. Her mother was more intent in trying to understand how Mary could tell she was actually with child in so short a time.

Finally, her father stopped his walking back and forth in the room and said what he and her mother both finally realized and felt. "Our Mary has never in her life done wrong or told a lie. If she tells us, an angel said she would have a child by the power of Yahweh, then she must be telling the truth. Who are we to question Yahweh?"

She then told them that the angel had told her that her cousin Elisabeth was six months with child as well. Her parents were

astonished at how she could know such a thing. While she was out talking with Joseph, they had just received word of that very thing. This further helped them to realize further the truth Mary was telling them. They told her that for now it might be good for her to visit Elisabeth and help her. A woman far outside of the normal child bearing age as she was would surely need help.

Mary was now both relieved and glad she had been able to tell Joseph before she left. She had had a feeling that after telling him this news, he would need a lot of alone time to come to grips with it. She finished packing a bag with clothes and other necessities. Perhaps in time an angel would tell him as well.

There were traders that regularly traveled the roads between towns. Most took on some passengers and provided transportation on wagons not fully loaded. Mary's father negotiated the fare for the trip to the Temple in Jerusalem from Nazareth. There were people at the Temple who knew Elisabeth's husband Zacharias. They would arrange for the final leg of her journey to their home in Juttah, a short distance south of Jerusalem.

Her trip to the city of Juttah went without incident. She paused just a moment at the front door of Zacharias and Elisabeth's home. After she quietly opened the door to enter, she called out softly to Elisabeth. When Elisabeth heard Mary's voice, the baby in her womb jerked violently, then immediately, she and the baby were filled with the Holy Spirit. Elisabeth then spoke out with a loud voice as Mary entered the room where Elisabeth was seated on a wide chair with soft cushions. Elisabeth prophesied,

*“Blessed are you among women and blessed is the child in your womb. How wonderful it is that the mother of my Yahweh has come to me. When I heard your voice, my baby jumped for*

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*joy. Blessed are you for you believed that all that has been told to you from Yahweh shall come to pass, ”*

Mary went across the room to Elisabeth. As she sat down beside her, Mary spoke as the Spirit of Yahweh moved her to also prophesy,

*“My very soul does magnify Yahweh, and my Spirit rejoices in Yahweh, my Savior. For He has chosen me a humble handmaid and from this time all generations who live shall call me blessed. He that is mighty has done to me great things and holy is His name and mercy is on them that fear from generation to generation. He has shown strength in His arm to scatter the proud in the vain imaginations of their hearts. He puts down the mighty in their seats and exalts them who are humbly born. He has filled the hungry with good things but the rich He has sent away empty. He has helped His servant Israel in remembrance of His mercy to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed forever.”*

Mary and Elisabeth hugged each other; both seemed to bubble over with excitement as they sat together. They had much to talk about since it had been nearly a year since they had seen each other.

“Oh, Elisabeth,” Mary questioned, “How did you know that I am with child by the Holy Spirit?”

“It came to me in a flash,” Elisabeth began to tell her, “I felt a surge of power from the top of my head to the tips of my toes. My baby jerked and kicked as if he was trying to jump for joy. Yes, I then knew that something wonderful had happened to you, Mary. It was as if my baby was calling out to another that he knows is soon to come after his birth.”

“It is marvelous that such miracles have happened to us,” Mary remarked, “During all my visits with you, I could not help from believing that someday, somehow, you would bear a child. Even as the years passed and you were beyond the age most women bear their babies. I never gave up hope for you.”

“You knew me very well to have thought that,” Elisabeth responded, “Not even Zacharias knew of my hope.”

Mary ended up staying at the home of Elisabeth and Zacharias for just over three months, helping Elisabeth with housework and cooking.<sup>20</sup>

Finally, the time arrived and Mary rejoiced as she watched the midwife help deliver a baby boy. Word spread quickly and soon their neighbors and other family members began to swarm into the home of Zacharias and Elisabeth. All rejoiced with her as Yahweh had shown such mercy on her by giving Zacharias and Elisabeth a son in their old age. On the eighth day as they were about to circumcise the child several called the baby boy Zacharias after the name of his father. Elisabeth cried out and said, “No, he shall be called John!”

The group stopped the proceedings, began to argue with her, and said, “There is none of your kindred called by that name.” They turned to Zacharias to get his response. Zacharias motioned for someone to get him a writing tablet. He then wrote, ‘His name is John.’

Immediately Zacharias was able to speak. The crowd stood in amazement as Zacharias who had been silent for so long, now was speaking aloud with a strong voice shouting praises to Yahweh, he was then filled with the Holy Spirit and began to prophesy,

*“Blessed be the Yahweh Elohim of Israel. He has visited and redeemed His people. He has raised a horn of salvation to us in the house of His servant David as He spoke by the mouth of*



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*His holy prophets from the beginning of the world. We shall be saved from our enemies and the hand of all that hate us. He will perform the mercy He promised to our father Abraham that He would grant unto us that we who are being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life. This child shall be called the prophet of the Highest. He shall go before the face of the Christ to prepare His ways. This child will give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins; through the tender mercy of our Yahweh; whereby the dayspring from on high has visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.”*

Awe and the fear of Yahweh came on all that dwelt around them. Word of these happenings spread throughout the hill country of Judea. As they listened to what had happened all wondered within their heart, what manner of child would their son become? **21**

Mary saw that Elisabeth was now strong enough to care for her home and new baby. It was amazing to see that Elisabeth seemed to have the vigor of women more than thirty years younger than her. Right after the child was circumcised on his eighth day, Mary packed and said her good-byes and set out on her trip back to her parent's home in Nazareth. Her heart was heavy and she longed to see Joseph but she knew she must wait until Joseph sought her. This would not happen until his mind was made up as to how he should properly deal with Mary and the miraculous baby she was carrying.

$\mathcal{R}$  of  $\mathcal{D}$

## Chapter 11

### **Joseph of Arimathea Returns**

It had now been over four months, since Jossi had listened to what Mary had told him in that field under the tree on that dismal terrible evening. In spite of his feelings he was embarrassed that he had so utterly lost control of himself in front of her. He even felt that she probably never wanted to see him again. Jossi continued his work but his life was as one with one foot in the grave. He could hardly keep his mind on his work and often made mistakes. His helpers and foremen began to check up on him and found most mistakes before these mistakes actually set their schedule back and cost considerable extra time and money.

Jossi did not know how to decide what he should do. Yes, he knew what the Tanakh said as well as the Holy Scrolls. However, was any of that the right thing for him to do? Was there some kind of exception to the law and traditions the Jews lived by? Should he put her away? Divorce her? This was the common practice when a man's betrothed was discovered to have been with another man. No matter what had happened to her, he really did not want Mary hurt, embarrassed, or shamed. Perhaps, he could pay for her to go far away so no one would know her shame.

Others could see he was troubled and his depression seemed to grow worse rather than better as the weeks passed. After his violent reaction when someone asked him about the wedding, no one dared to bring it up again. He had stopped work on the house that he and Mary were to live in. Then he had just about decided to complete it and sell it to someone else whose dreams and hope was still alive. Whenever he went there, he was simply not able to work on it. He tried to make sure all of his workmen kept working on other projects and stayed away from the house. He did not want anyone to see him

when he went there because all he could do was sit down and cry his heart out which was not very manly and certainly something he had never done before.

One night, as Jossi sat picking at his supper in the tavern, he was startled as the door fairly burst open and his Uncle Joe came in like a storm. Joe wrapped his arms around him in a bear hug and literally picked him up off his chair.

“Jossi!” Joseph of Arimathea exclaimed with joy, “Jossi, how are you me boy. I told you I would be back before your wedding and here I am.”

“Joe,” Jossi replied with a grim look that seemed to be burned onto his face, “I am glad to see you. Come, we must talk; but not here.”

Jossi lead Joe out of the tavern to the nearly finished house he had been building to be the home of Mary and him. Once inside, he nearly collapsed upon a rustic bench. He put his head into both hands as he broke down with sobs and tears. Joe was totally taken aback. Never had he seen his nephew and friend behave in such a manner. In fact, Joe had never seen Jossi cry even when he had been injured and had his hand or arm in bandages or a sling.

“My Elohim! Jossi!” Joe said as he sat down beside him on the bench and put an arm around Jossi’s shoulder, “what on earth has happened?”

“It’s all gone,” Jossi said between sobs, “everything that I had hoped and dreamed of. Everything is gone. I have nothing left to live for.”

“What are you saying? Has your business failed?” Joe asked, he too was in shock for Jossi to act this way. Hesitantly he asked,

“Where is Mary? Why isn’t she with you? What does she say about what has happened?”

“That is what I am trying to tell you.” Jossi responded, “That’s the problem.” Then Jossi took Joe’s shoulders and squeezed them so hard, Joe almost cried out. Then in a crazed wide-eyed expression, he looked directly into Joe’s eyes and exclaimed to him, “Mary is with child!”

“Oh, Jossi,” Joe replied struggling and finally getting loose from Jossi’s grip, “How could you be so inconsiderate and thoughtless? Why couldn’t you wait? The wedding is just a few weeks away.”

“Joe,” Jossi answered him with horror and anguish in his voice, “the child is not mine.”

“Oh no,” Joe’s voice shuddered as he answered this unbelievable statement, “that is not possible. Mary would never sleep with another man. She loves only you, Jossi; she would never do something like that. She must have been attacked and raped by another man? Are you absolutely positive that she is really with child?”

“Yes, I am sure,” Jossi affirmed, “she told me herself. She told me that she had not been with another man nor was she attacked and raped by some other man. Her story is simply crazy. She said the child within her is holy. Something about conceiving a son by the power of the Holy Spirit. I have never heard of such a thing.”

“What are you going to do?” Joe asked. His voice and mannerism showed his deep concern for both Jossi and Mary. He too could not see beyond his knowledge of how a woman can be with child. In his mind, this can only happen when a woman sleeps with a man.

“I really don’t know what to do,” Jossi answered, “the right thing by law and tradition is that I cannot marry her and that I should put her away. But I cannot make a public spectacle of her, Joe. I still love her and I do not want anyone to know about this disgrace.

Maybe she can go and live with her cousin. She could tell others that she got married there and her husband died before the child was born.”

“Mary could never do that, she would never tell a lie,” Joe reminded him.

“That is why all this is driving me mad,” Jossi responded his voice again revealed the great stress he was under. “How could what she says happened to her be true?”

Both shook their heads. Neither man could find any explanation or satisfactory solution to the problem. In great sadness, they returned to the tavern. Jossi just sat there and hardly touched his drink or the food he had been eating before Joe arrived. He finally went on up to his room at the tavern, while Joe had the tavern keeper bring him some food. He had first entered the tavern as hungry as a bear but now sat there picking at his food eating little while his mind wandered down an endless series of hopeless alternatives Jossi and Mary might take. None of them was good. Jossi, he knew, was a just man who would never compromise his faith and obedience to Yahweh’s laws. Finally, he wiped his mouth on a napkin and left the dining room. He went up to the room he had reserved. Closing the door, he changed into his night clothes and lay down upon the bed, hoping that sleep would take him away from the terrible dilemma facing those he loved that had turned his joyous return to that of bitter hopelessness.

In a room down the hall, Jossi tossed and turned. Though he was somehow able to sleep, he was miserable, as his dreams were nightmares full of anguish and sadness. Then his dream changed and a bright light filled his dreamscape. An angel of Yahweh appeared and he somehow knew this was the Great Archangel Gabriel. The

angel began to speak, “Joseph, son of David, fear not to take Mary for your wife. Truly, the Holy Spirit has brought about the child within her. She shall deliver a son and you shall call his name, Jesus. He shall save his people from their sins. All this has been done to fulfill the words of Yahweh spoken by the prophet Isaiah, which says, ‘*Behold, a virgin shall be with child and shall bring forth a son. They shall call his name Emmanuel, which is interpreted, Elohim with us.*’”

With a start, Jossi awoke and threw the covers off his bed and rose. The sun had not yet risen, as Jossi dressed and went downstairs to inquire as to the room his uncle had taken for the night. He leaped up the stairs taking two and three steps at a time and ran down the hall to Joe’s room. There he began to beat on the door like a mad man as he called out, “Joe, Joe, open the door.”

The door opened and before the sleepy-eyed occupant could say a word, Jossi brushed him aside and entered the room. Joe was speechless for before him his nephew who just a few hours before was in utter dejection and now was nearly jumping up and down with joy and happiness. What in the world could have caused this change?

“Joe,” he said trying to keep his voice down but failing, “Joe, it’s a miracle, a miracle from Yahweh.” He kept repeating this. Finally, Joe got him to gain control of himself and to listen to him.

“Jossi, what is a miracle?” Joe asked as he took hold of Jossi to get him to settle down and explain.

“I had a dream,” Jossi began, “an angel; it was the Great Archangel Gabriel of Yahweh who appeared before me. He told me that everything Mary told me is true. The Holy Spirit caused her to be with child. This fulfills what the prophet Isaiah prophesied, ‘*Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and*

*they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, Elohim with us.'* It says clearly that a virgin, a virgin Joe, will conceive! Mary is still a virgin. She has not betrayed me by being with another man. This is truly a great miracle from Yahweh. How terribly wrong I was to ever doubt her."

Joe hardly knew what to say. He was ecstatic that Yahweh had resolved the horrible dilemma that had plagued Jossi and Mary. Then he knew what to tell Jossi, "What are you waiting for? Go to her, go to Mary!"

Without even a good-bye, Jossi ran down the stairs and out of the tavern. It was twilight just before the sun rose to begin a new day as he ran through the streets and alley shortcuts he knew by heart and could have made his way even if he was blind. Reaching Mary's parent's home, he began to pound on the door calling to Mary. The door opened and Mary's father stood in the doorway blocking the entrance.

"What do you want?" he asked gruffly, still in his bedclothes and not fully awake.

"Please, I must speak to Mary," Jossi pleaded.

"I am not sure she wants to see you," his voice countered angrily.

"But I must see her," Jossi continued to plead, "Oh please tell her that I must talk with her. It is very important. She must see me."

"What's going on?" It was Mary's mother this time coming to the door.

"Please wake Mary," Jossi called to Mary's mother, "tell her that Joseph, her fiancé, must talk to her."

"What's going on? Who's making such a racket?" This time it was Mary's voice.



“Oh Mary,” Jossi called out, “Please, I must talk to you. I too have been visited by Gabriel the Archangel of our Yahweh.”

At that, Mary pushed past her parents and came to the door to face Jossi.

“What did you say?” she asked to be sure she heard his words clearly.

“Oh Mary, my love, my life. Please forgive my ignorant stupidity,” Jossi fell to his knees before her and took her hands and began kissing them. Mary’s parents looked at each other and her mother motioned for her father to follow her away from the door to the fireplace to give the couple some privacy.

“How horribly wrong I have been,” Jossi admitted as he continued to knell at her feet. “I should have trusted you and believed you when you told me what happened to you. It took our Yahweh to send the Archangel Gabriel to open my stubborn mind to accept what you had told me. Please, please forgive me.”

“Joseph,” Mary said looking down in sympathy at him, “If I had been in your place, I do not think I would have hardly acted any differently. What has happened to me, to us, is beyond anything anyone could imagine happening. It took the angel, Gabriel from Yahweh for me to believe and again it took the angel, Gabriel from Yahweh to ease your mind and accept this blessed event.”

“If you will still have me, let the wedding take place just as soon as possible,” Jossi told her, “No more delays.”

“Everything has been ready for weeks,” she said with a smile, “All we needed was the bridegroom to come to his senses. Of course, I will have you. I love you, Jossi.”

“I love you too, Mary,” Jossi said as he rose to his feet and pulled her close and embraced her.

After a moment, she pulled away and looked around the door. She saw her parents had started a fire in the fireplace and were trying to look preoccupied warming their hands.

“Mom, Dad,” Mary called to them. When they had come across the room and were near the door she said, “Set another place at the table. My husband needs to have a good breakfast so he can finish our new home.”

In just a couple more weeks, Mary and Joseph were wed. It seemed like over half of Nazareth attended the wedding feast. Mary was very happy that her cousin Elisabeth and her husband, Zacharias came and was elated to again see their baby boy named John. Another special guest was Uncle Joseph of Arimathea, who had delayed sailing on another trip.

The couple moved into their new home. Even though they were married, Joseph would not consummate their marriage until after the child the Holy Spirit caused to be in her was born.<sup>22</sup> At that time, little did they know that the child would not be born in Nazareth. Wheels were already turning in Rome that would prevent this from happening. Unseen by mortal beings, Yahweh was causing things to happen to fulfill what was prophesied by the prophet Micah hundreds of years before.

*“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, From everlasting.”*

Micah 5: 2

## Chapter 12

### **Relocating to Bethlehem**

“Mary,” Joseph called to his wife as he returned from the market.

“What is it?” Mary asked as she came from the bedroom.

“There is a proclamation that was just posted in the market. It is a decree from Caesar Augustus that a special tax is to be levied. All must go to the city of the lineage of the eldest male of each family. As we are wed, that means we both must go to Bethlehem, the city of King David,” he announced. **23**

“I hope we do not have to travel soon,” she replied, “my time is drawing near to deliver my child.”

“I am sorry to have to tell you that the deadline is no later than the Last Great Day of the Feast of Tabernacles,” he said softly with concern for her then added, “it is just like the Roman government to take advantage of our faith and obedience to Yahweh Elohim. They know we will be gathering and have the savings we have set aside to attend the Feast and they want to get their hands on as much of it as they can.”

“Oh Joseph,” Mary sighed as she tried to stifle a moan, “Traveling from Nazareth to Bethlehem will be such an ordeal.” She stifled another groan and sighed instead. “But I am sure our Yahweh will provide for our needs and give us a safe journey.”

“I had just about decided against going to Jerusalem this year for the Feast as I feared your being there when it was time for the baby to be born. Having to find a midwife amid all the commotion of Feast goers will be near impossible. However, I guess being outside of Jerusalem in Bethlehem will not be so bad. Maybe the baby’s

arrival will be delayed a couple of weeks giving us time to return here,” he said hoping.

“He will come when he is good and ready and nothing will delay him,” Mary smiled as she felt the large bulge in her abdomen. Then she noticed a slight kick from the baby and wondered if he knew what they were discussing.

“Mary, I was talking with father the other day,” Joseph began as he sat down at the table near her. She could tell that he was beating around the bush delaying to say exactly what was really on his mind, “there has been a downturn in construction lately and it is getting harder and harder for us to make ends meet dividing the work between us.”

“Go ahead and tell me what is on your mind,” Mary insisted in getting to the point rather than slowly talking around the main issue that was on someone’s mind.

“Well,” Joseph said optimistically, “maybe this decree is a godsend. If that is possible. You see, I can load my tools on one donkey and have you ride on another and when we get to Bethlehem I can check around and see if there is anybody needing some carpentry work done.”

“What about our home here in Nazareth?” Mary questioned as her mind began to think about what she would need to do in preparing for such a move. They had hardly begun to furnish the house and now Joseph was talking about moving to another house many miles away.

“Oh, I have that already figured out,” Joseph began to unload the plans he had begun to formulate, “One of my cousins would like to rent our home while we are away. He is very flexible and said if we can come back at any time then he would find another place so we can move back into our house. I expect we may be in Bethlehem through the bad weather this winter and will probably be back here

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in a year or two at most. The growth of Nazareth should pick back up by then, I am hopeful.”

“But Bethlehem is so far away. What about Capernaum up by the Sea of Galilee?” She questioned. “I have heard that it is such a pretty place and the summers are not as hot as it is here or in Jerusalem.”

“I thought about Capernaum and several other cities,” he admitted. “But, for some reason my mind kept coming back to Bethlehem. When I saw the decree posted in the market then I knew that Yahweh was pointing the way for us.”

“Well, you need to change your mind on how we are going to travel. You will need to build a large wagon and get a couple of strong oxen as I am not going without our furnishings, cooking pots, linens, and clothing not to mention how I feel right now. Make sure there is plenty of padding on the seat,” Mary’s voice was demanding but she could not keep a straight face and began to smile at Joseph whom she could see had been worried as to her response to his plans.

“Then you don’t mind moving there?” He asked sheepishly.

“Of course not,” she reached out to him and he drew close and put his arms around her. She nuzzled in his embrace and hugged him back as she said, “We will be much closer to my cousin Elisabeth. And besides, you are my husband and a wife’s place is to be by her man. I would follow you to the ends of the world.”

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The journey to Bethlehem was long and tedious but without problems. Mary had occasional pains but felt confident that her child would not come until they had a place to stay in Bethlehem. Along

the way, they met and passed by other travelers who were also on their way to Jerusalem for the Feast and who would stop by their home cities to pay the tax. Joseph hoped the travelers would find places to stay in Jerusalem and not overflow into surrounding cities that included Bethlehem. His hope was not to be realized. After reaching Bethlehem, he had gone to six different inns and he was short on hope as he entered the seventh inn. The innkeeper told him the same thing as the other six had done. There were no rooms available.

“Please Sir,” Joseph said as he wearily pleaded, “We have traveled so far and have already tried six other tavern and inns in Bethlehem.”

“As I said we have filled every room with travelers and even have some sleeping on tables in the dining room. We simply have no more room,” the innkeeper replied.

“But my wife is with child and I fear her time is very close,” Joseph continued to beg, “Anything, anything, please you must have some place for us.”

The innkeeper looked at him with compassion and then his eyes went up as a thought entered his conscious mind, “If you do not mind, I have an empty stall in the stable. It has been recently cleaned and its floor is covered with fresh straw.”

“Oh, thank you Sir,” Joseph exclaimed, “Of course we don’t mind. It will be fine.”

Joseph ran back to the wagon where Mary sat covered with a blanket against the cool night air. Without saying anything, he jumped into the seat and started the wagon moving around the tavern.

“No luck again, Joseph,” She sighed not really posing a question as making a statement.

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“Don’t worry, dear, we will soon be out of the night air and in a shelter. Just in time to get out of the rain,” he said, as he looked up at the billowing clouds that were turning darker and threatening. He drove the oxen around behind the tavern and into the open door of the stable. After stopping the wagon, he jumped down and ran from stall to stall until he found one at the end on the right that was empty. There was a lamp secured to the center of the passageway that kept it from getting close to the stalls and possibly setting straw on fire. It provided barely enough light for Joseph to inspect the stalls. To his satisfaction, he found the proffered stall was clean and there was enough extra straw that he quickly made a bed for his wife. He sniffed the air and was surprised that there was hardly any foul smell in the stable. The stable must have been mucked earlier that very day, he thought. He then drove the wagon near the stall and helped Mary down and into the stall.

Once he got her situated, he unhitched the oxen from the wagon, and put them in a pen outside of the stable with other livestock. There was a covering in the pen to protect the animals from the elements and there were feeding bins and water troughs as well as plenty of straw for animals to lie down on to rest. He put some extra hay in a feed bin for the oxen and checked to see that there was ample water for the livestock to drink. Satisfied that his animals were taken care of he returned to the stall and closed the back door. He found Mary was already sleeping peacefully. He recalled her moaning during the nights they stopped on the roadside as they tried to sleep in the wagon. Now, she could get some real rest before she had to face the ordeal of childbirth that he realized was not too distant.

Joseph was up as the sun came up. He left Mary quietly so she could get more rest. At the tavern, he was able to buy some fresh baked bread. This would be a nice change of pace from the dried bread they had been eating along the way. He also learned that the

wife of the tavern's owner was a midwife and she would be available to help deliver Mary's child when the time came.

"How are you doing?" he asked as he saw Mary was awake when he entered the stall with the fresh bread.

"I feel so much better," she replied with a smile and then she caught the smell of the bread, "Oh, is that fresh bread!" She started to get up but Joseph motioned for her to stay put. He sat down beside her, broke the bread, and pulled a wine sack from their pack. Together, they ate the bread along with some cheese they had brought with gusto and quenched their thirst with wine.

"I have to go to the town center to pay our tax," he said after they had eaten.

"Can you wait?" she asked, "I am afraid my time is very soon and I need you here with me."

"I guess I can wait a couple of days," he assured her, "Old Caesar will get his tax, but he can wait. There are more important things to take care of first."



Part Three:  
The Christ From Birth to Two  
Years

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## Chapter 13

### **The Birth of the Christ**

During that day, Mary became even more uncomfortable. She tried to remember all that her mother had taught her about having a baby. She panted as she rubbed her belly. When she was able, she softly sang songs she remembered hearing other mothers sing to their babies as they cradled and slowly rocked them in their arms. She figured if those songs were soothing to babies in their mother's arms then they should be good for a baby in their mother's womb.

Shortly after the sun went down, her water broke and Joseph ran to get the midwife. Joseph and the midwife returned within minutes. Then he began what most expectant fathers had done since time began, pacing back and forth outside the stall. He checked on his oxen and even put extra feed in their bin. He paced some more and then took a bucket and drew water from the well and poured it into the water trough. Each minute seemed like an hour.

Joseph looked up at the full moon. Then he found a secluded place, got on his knees, and began to pray. He thanked Yahweh for His goodness in supplying all their needs. His prayer then turned to Mary. With great earnest and sincerity, he prayed that Yahweh would help his wife, give her strength, and preserve her life. Just as he finished his petition to Yahweh, he heard the cry of a newborn baby after taking its first breath.

With joy, he ran and opened the door to the stable and then ran to the stall and opened its gate. Inside the stall, he found the midwife handing the baby to Mary who was sitting up in the bed of straw. The baby quickly quieted down as he began to nurse as Mary cradled him in her arms. The midwife took the linens and the pans of water

she had used during childbirth and after smiling at Mary and Joseph and touching the baby's cheek, she left.

“He is such a beautiful baby,” Joseph said breathlessly.

“No, he is a boy so we should say he is handsome,” Mary said. Then as she looked at him and his tiny little fingers wrapped around one of her fingers she exclaimed, “Oh, I don't care what is proper. He is simply beautiful.”

Joseph could no longer find his voice he was so filled with awe. He went out of the stall and finding a small-unused manger carried it into the stall. There he filled it with the freshest straw he could find. Mary had wrapped the babe in clean white linen. After Mary had nursed the newborn infant, Joseph took the babe wrapped in what people called ‘swaddling clothes’ and placed him in the manger. **24**

Both Mary and the babe were soon asleep and Joseph sat down on the straw between Mary and the manger that held the babe. His head was bowed as he quietly gave Yahweh thanks for the miracle of life. For the wife he adored and for the child who most would call his son. He knew this child was the answer to the prayers his people had made to Yahweh for many centuries. Before his very eyes, the prophecies of old had finally happened. The Messiah, the Christ, the Savior, the very Son of the Most-High Yahweh, was lying beside him in a manger, in a stall, in a stable. He should be in the grandest of palaces ever made, Joseph thought. From such a humble beginning, what shall be the path of this child?

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*The Early Years of the Christ*

Outside of Bethlehem on a hillside, several shepherds had gathered around a campfire to ward off the cool autumn night air. Their flocks of sheep were nearby and they took turns watching over them. In less than a couple more months, it would be winter and they would need to bring their flocks in from the hills to pens and weather-proof stalls to shelter them from the cold. They needed to keep the sheep out to pasture as long as possible so the hay and feed they had harvested would last. Sometimes an early winter would happen and they would have to rush around gathering the sheep or lose some due to the cold. They dreaded winter, but there was something they dreaded even more. They had seen signs of a wolf the day before. In a patch of dirt near an outcropping of rocks, its paw prints were visible after the rain had fallen a couple of nights before.

“No sight of that wolf so far,” said one of the shepherds as he returned to the fire. Then he said to the next shepherd that would patrol around the perimeter of the flocks, “Keep a close watch for he’s sure to be prowling out there somewhere waiting for a chance to run in and snatch one of the lambs before dawn”.

The other shepherd got up and stretched as it was his turn to walk about the perimeter to guard the sheep. Suddenly, the wind swirled and the sky lit up as if lightning had struck nearby. All the shepherds jumped to their feet preparing to run for their lives when above them they heard a sound like thousands of birds flying overhead. Then a great voice boomed out.

“*Fear not,*” the voice, said clearly. Their fear turned to awe when they looked up and saw an angel hovering in the air above them. “*Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Elohim. Moreover, this shall be a sign unto you.*”

*You shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.”*

Suddenly, the whole sky was filled with bursts of lights of all colors and with angels, praising Yahweh and singing, “*Glory to Yahweh in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.*”

The shepherds regained their wits after the angels were gone. They began to say to each other, “The city of David, that’s Bethlehem, just over those two hills right there. We must go and see this child. The angel of Yahweh has told us that the babe would be lying in a manger. That means the babe has been born in a stable and not a house or room at an inn. Quick, we must see this thing that the angels of Yahweh have announced to us.” They forsook their flocks and all ran into the city of David. As the unseen hand of Yahweh guided their paths, at the very first stable they entered they found the child in a stall exactly as they had been told.

Joseph had dozed off but was awoken when he heard the gate on the stall make a creaking noise as it began to open. He jumped up prepared to protect his family. Several men dressed as shepherds were standing in the opening. One of them held up his hands in a gesture that men used as a sign of peace. Joseph saw all their eyes were upon the manger, their gaze was filled with wonder, and several of them had their eyes opened wide in awe and were pointing at the newborn infant in the manger.

“It’s just as the angel told us,” they were saying, “there’s the babe, in a manger.”

“Who told you?” Mary asked just awaking at the noise made by the shepherds.

“An angel,” one began to tell her, “An angel from Yahweh, told us the Messiah, our Christ, had just been born and we were to find him wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger in Bethlehem.”

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“The whole sky just lite up and then angels began to sing,” another shepherd added.

Then for nearly an hour, they talked about what the shepherds had seen and heard. The shepherds took turns holding the baby. They spoke out about what a special child this was. The babe looked into the eyes of each one who took him. He smiled, cooed, and even giggled. All were amazed. In their experience, newborn infants rarely did anything but sleep, nurse, cry, and make a mess in their clothes. Finally, the shepherds left the stable. They were so excited they went into the tavern and woke the innkeeper. Soon, others who were sleeping in the dining area awoke and came over to hear what the shepherds were saying. After the shepherds left the inn, they went to their homes and began to tell everyone they knew about what had happened that night. Lastly, they returned to their flocks and found all their sheep were still on the hillside and had not been attacked by the wolves while they were away. They continued to praise and glorify Yahweh for all the things they were told by the angel and had seen with their own eyes.**25**

After the shepherds had left, Mary and Joseph talked about what had happened.

“It does not surprise me,” Joseph told Mary, “when a child is born the father can hardly keep from telling others. All this happening during the night while in a stable made me think I should wait until morning to tell others. But Yahweh sure wanted to let others know that His Son had just been born and it did not matter when or where it happened.”

Mary smiled as she was again holding her son in her arms. She pondered what had happened this night. Yes, an angel had told her that her child was special. The very Son of Yahweh was cradled in her arms. His birth had been announced to shepherds on a hillside

near Bethlehem. They rejoiced when they saw Him. How will others feel when they find out about the Son of Yahweh being born? She looked down at her son. Jesus, she thought, what a fine name. Jesus, my son and Yahweh's son.



## Chapter 14

### **The Messenger to Parthia**

In the city of Asaac near the geographic center of land controlled by the Empire of Parthia far to the east of Jerusalem, three priests or Magi as they were called in Parthia, formed a semi-circle around an altar in the Temple. They were on their knees praying. Suddenly, an angel appeared before them. He blazed as if he was on fire and his wings slowly swept back and forth. They were frozen in fear and awe as their eyes looked up at the angel between the fingers of their hands covering their faces. Then the angel spoke.

“Behold, servants of the Most-High Yahweh,” said the angel in a deep voice that rumbled and echoed in the large chamber, “I am Michael, a Great Archangel who stands in the presence of the Most-High Yahweh Almighty. I have been sent to tell you that your prayers have been answered. The Messiah, the Christ has just been born.”

“Oh, great messenger from the Almighty,” one of the Magi named Rav spoke out his voice trembled in fear. “We must go to worship him. How may we find him?”

“What say the prophesies of the Holy Scriptures of his birth place?” Michael asked as he looked down upon the group. Michael could not help but smile as he watched the conversation of the Magi who seemed to forget he was present.

“The city of David,” another Magi named Lux answered. “Bethlehem in Judea, that city is just north of Jerusalem.”

“That province is governed by Rome,” the third Magi named Mors warned. “We must be careful if we are to enter the domain of Rome. Citizens of Parthia are not favored in the realm of the Roman Empire.”

“Yet,” Lux, the leader of the group spoke out, “we are at peace with Rome at this time. The truce has lasted for years and we will follow protocol to not incite an incident with the host of Rome.”

“It will still be difficult to find exactly where the Christ is actually at when we are able to finally get to the city,” Rav added, “I would estimate the time it will take to prepare and then journey from here to there will take over a year.”

“Possibly as much as three years,” Mors stated.

“I think we can all agree that it will take between one and three years. After waiting hundreds of years is there any among us who thinks the time to prepare and then journey to pay our respect and honor to the king of all mankind too long a time?” Lux summarized their discussion. Finally, Michael felt he needed to again be part of their conversation.

“Do not worry,” Michael’s voice rumbled. The three Magi stopped talking and again looked upward toward him. He continued, “I have been given the task to guide you to the place the Christ will be when you arrive.”

“Will you appear as you do now along the way?” Rav asked.

“No,” Michael answered, “You will see me as a bright star before you on the horizon. Note the direction of the star each morning and travel that way during the day.”

With that, the angel vanished. The three Magi looked at each other for a few minutes as their minds whirled with thoughts concerning the preparation and the actual journey they would embark upon. **26**

“Remember the prophecies that have been passed down for centuries?” Lux asked the others. “A star will appear to guide the way to the Christ.”

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“We must tell the rest of the Magi. Oh my, we must not let the royal family, the Arsacids, hear of this news,” Mors announced.

“You are right,” Lux concurred. “Emperor Phraates would not be happy with such news. He has already killed many others who were in line for the throne. That another future king has been born might result in serious problems. I recommend telling only those of the Magi who are intent on keeping heirs to the throne far from harm’s way.”

“Such is a wise plan, Lux,” Mors agreed.

“Yes indeed. Say, we must also gather gifts,” Rav cried out in fear of overlooking something important to protocol in coming before a king, “we must bring the king gifts. Look to the treasury of the temple. We must honor Him with gifts as well as our praise as we come before Him to worship Him who is born King of all mankind.”

Lux called to messengers on duty and gave them specific instructions. Soon, unknown to the vast city of Asaac, some households of the Megistanes were in turmoil as messengers of the three Magi knocked on their doors. By dawn, these men began to enter the assembly hall trying to find out additional information of what was going on at so early a time to be summoned to the assembly hall. Two hours after sunrise the last person to enter the assembly hall was the leader of the Megistanes, Lux. He walked to the center of the room and began to address the assembly.

“Citizens of Parthia, noble Megistanes,” Lux began his speech, “during this past night, I and two of my associates of the Magi were in deep and earnest prayer before our Yahweh. Suddenly, an angel of Yahweh appeared unto us.” He paused for effect as the crowd hummed in astonished conversation.

“How did you know it was an angel of our Yahweh?” One of the assembled Magi shouted out.

“He told us his name was Michael. This Great Archangel appeared out of thin air and floated above the three of us as his great wings swept back and forth. He stated that he was a Great Archangel in the service of the Most-High Yahweh Almighty. His countenance was that of fire. I could feel heat radiate upon my face as I looked upon him. He stated that he had a message from Almighty Yahweh,” again Lux paused for effect.

“What was his message?” this time several of the Magi shouted as they became more intrigued by the proceedings.

“The Great King of all mankind, the Messiah and Christ had just been born on earth!” Lux announced with a loud passionate voice.

Excited shouts and conversations rang out throughout the entire assembly. Some men rose to their feet, others fell to their knees, while others sat stunned by the announcement with bowed heads.<sup>27</sup>

“So, it has finally come to pass as we Magi have read in the Holy Scrolls and prophesied and waited for hundreds of years,” Lux said as the assembly was filled with wonder. Then he raised his arms to gain the attention of the entire assembly. A silence came over everyone as they turned to look at him. Then he made a proclamation,

“Citizens of Parthia, we have been blessed by our Yahweh with prosperity and power for many years. Now our Yahweh has made this great announcement to us, His people, once known as Israel before the Assyrians carried our fathers away into captivity. We have worked our way out of slavery to make a home here in the East. We were not worthy to return to our homeland but now the Almighty has forebear our sins and has given us this great announcement to share with us, His people, and all mankind that our Savior has been born. We must honor our King. We must go to worship our Christ.

“However,” Lux paused to insure all would hear his warning, “This news must not reach any of the Arsacids and especially the

Emperor. You are aware of his treachery in having heirs to the throne killed. If this Christ is of the blood of Phares of the lineage of David, which undoubtably he is, he will also be heir to the throne of Parthia.”

Nearly the whole assembly spoke in a hushed voice and nodded their heads in agreement, to what Lux had said.

Then Mors shouted out to the others, “If Emperor Phraates hears of our acts concerning this event, we too will be killed.”

“Good point,” Rav shouted along with others.

With that, all the Magi who were present swore an oath of secrecy that no Arsacid would learn of this event. Plans were made and the group began preparation to send the three Magi who were present when the angel appeared to see the newborn King. A contingency of temple guards was added to protect the treasure that would be presented to the King. Chests of gold and casks of costly frankincense and myrrh were placed in wagons to take this tribute to honor the Christ, the King of all mankind.

The Magi were known for taking long journeys into other lands beyond the empire of Parthia so it was not a strange sight as a caravan was slowly and carefully organized in Asaac. The Emperor was busy dealing with problems on the northeastern front with roving bands of Mongols attacking some of the Parthian cities along the Oxus River. Weeks and then months slowly passed, then finally all the preparations were finally completed and the entourage prepared to leave on the morrow. As the sun set a bright star appeared on the western horizon that had not been there the night before. The three Magi began to rejoice as they saw the angel was ready to lead them to the city of the King. They carefully noted the direction of the star. They would embark toward it at sunrise as a new day began.

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## Chapter 15

### **The Family Settles in Bethlehem**

Joseph had finally been able to go to pay the tax Caesar had decreed. He stood in line and watched as families stood before the magistrates table. One man started to argue with the magistrate only to have a soldier come over and strike him with his hand and threaten him with a sword. Another man before leaving the table looked at his receipt and then said something to the magistrate holding the receipt up before him. Again, a soldier started to come toward him waving his sword and the man fled without further comment. All the men with wives and children kept their conversations at the table to a minimum. The magistrate just laughed along with the soldiers and then returned to the business at hand. “Next” he shouted with a surly voice.

It was Joseph’s turn to stand before the table. The magistrate was leaning back in his chair and was talking to one of the score of guards standing nearby to secure and protect the tax money being collected. He finally turned back around and looked at Joseph with a somewhat bored expression.

“How many in the family?” the magistrate asked as he stifled a yawn.

“Myself, my wife, and a newborn infant,” Joseph replied.

“Why are you all not present here as the decree demands?” the magistrate became more alert and demanding.

“My wife has just yesterday given birth,” Joseph tried to explain. “After traveling all the way from Nazareth and then giving birth just after we arrived has caused her to be very weak.”

“Where are they?” scrutinized the magistrate.

“She and the newborn infant are in a stable near the edge of town,” Joseph answered, “there wasn’t any room at the inn and that was the only place we could find to stay and to get out of the weather.”

“Why do you insist on calling it a newborn infant? Be more specific. Is it a boy or girl?” the magistrate asked becoming more impatient.

“The child, my...my son. He’s a boy,” Joseph replied feeling very uneasy.

“Good, good, boys certainly are more valuable,” the magistrate, acknowledged. Before Joseph could further comment, the magistrate told him the tax. “Ten deniers for each male and five for the female. That will be twenty-five deniers.”

Joseph had brought nearly one hundred deniers with him that he intended to use to rent a home and get a business started in construction work in Bethlehem. The tax amount he was just told was several times more than what the proclamation had announced. As Joseph hesitated, the magistrate’s look became a scowl. The magistrate motioned for one of the soldiers, as he looked Joseph’s way, “I have heard that these peasants from Nazareth multiply like sheep. That is why they are staying in a stable. Perhaps we need to send a few of the soldiers to the stable and round them all up to see just how many there really are to be taxed.”

“Twenty-five deniers,” Joseph said as he laid coins on the table.

The magistrate held up his hand to the soldier and smiled, “We all know how honest the fine folk of Nazareth are. Here is your receipt.”

Joseph took the receipt. After walking away from the tax collector, he looked at the receipt and noticed that it had written on it five deniers total for one adult male and one adult female, and one male child. He walked farther away from the table and stopped



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behind a wall. Then he looked around the wall and saw the magistrate take what he had collected and put a small amount in one bag and with the rest, he began dividing it with the soldiers. Joseph quickly decided that it was not worth troubling Mary with a band of soldiers coming and forcing her to carry the baby to the tax table no matter how much he was charged. If the magistrate had sent soldiers to the stable to get his wife and child, he would probably also be charged an additional fee for the work of the soldiers. No, he thought as he shook his head, it was best to pay whatever the magistrate charged him and be on his way. Somehow, he would make do on less money to start his business here in Bethlehem. For some reason, he could not get out of his mind that the family needed to remain here rather than return to Nazareth or go to another city in Judea or Galilee.

On the fifth day after arriving, Joseph found a house for the family on the northwest side of Bethlehem not very far from the inn and stable where his son had been born. He unloaded the wagon and set the furniture in the three rooms. The main room was used to sleep in as well as to cook and to eat and visit with others. It had a large fireplace to cook in and they put a table in the corner near the fireplace to prepare food and to eat on after it was cooked in the fireplace. There were two other rooms and each had a door to the outside. In the larger one, Joseph used it as a workshop and to keep his tools. He quickly built a workbench in it from discarded wood he found just outside of town. In the other smaller room, he built in shelves to store clothing, pans for washing, and other miscellaneous things. In one corner he placed a pot that served as a toilet and Mary hung a curtain around it for privacy. The main room was quite crowded but Mary was able to arrange everything so there was a good size space in the center for the baby to lay and play with the

small wooden animals Joseph had carved in Nazareth before He had seen the decree of the special tax.

Twice a day, when he woke up and before going to bed, Joseph took the pot and dumped it in a pit on the outskirts of the city. There was a covered bin of lye by the pit that people were supposed to use a scoop and toss some of the powdered lye on the waste that was added. From the smell, he reasoned that few took the time or trouble to do so. He always tossed several extra scoops each time he came there into the pit. It was far enough where its odors did not reach their home and Joseph did not mind carrying the pot so far because of this. He wondered how people who lived in houses close by the pit could stand the odor but realized that most people just get used to whatever circumstances life brought their way rather than doing something about it.

On the eighth day after Jesus was born, the Rabbi from the synagogue in Bethlehem came to Joseph and Mary's home to perform the circumcision of Jesus. Mary could not help but cry as she heard her infant son cry out in pain as the cutting instrument removed the foreskin. After bandages were applied, the infant was handed to the waiting arms of its mother.<sup>28</sup> The infant softly whimpered and the mother sobbed as she walked the floor with her baby. Joseph thanked the Rabbi and bid him farewell. He smiled as he saw the love and comfort Mary gave to the child he would care for as if he was own flesh and blood.

After thirty-three days, Mary completed the days of purification according to the Law of Moses. Then she and Joseph and the child went to the Temple in Jerusalem. The Law stated that an offering of two turtledoves was required. Joseph had set a trap and caught two

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turtledoves outside of Bethlehem a couple of days after they had moved into their rented house. He put them in a cage that he had built and they provided some grain and fresh water each day to keep the birds alive to take to the Temple so they could present them as an offering for the priest to sacrifice.

On this trip to the Temple, at the same time as they reached the outskirts of Jerusalem to go to the temple, in another part of the city of Jerusalem, there was a just, and devout man named Simeon. He had spent much time in prayer during his life petitioning Yahweh every day to send the Christ. Years before as he prayed, he had heard a gentle voice say, *“My faithful servant. Your hope for Israel shall be revealed to you before you pass from this life.”* He never doubted those words though many years had passed since he heard them. At that exact time, he heard that voice again tell him, *“Go quickly, to the Temple.”* He knew what this meant and without pausing, Simeon fastened his sandals on his feet and left his home and as quickly as his old legs would take him, made his way to the Temple. Entering the Temple, he came upon Joseph and Mary with the baby just after they had offered the sacrifice of the two turtledoves. Simeon slowly walked toward Mary holding out his arms. The look of adoration on his face as he beheld the child told her that she could trust this man. Without hesitation, Mary realized that this man was from Yahweh as she placed the infant in his arms. Taking the infant in his arms, he looked down into his face with a smile. The infant wide-eyed looked up at the man and he too smiled and cooed, his tiny fingers wrapped around the thumb on the old man’s left hand. Tears welled up in Simeon’s eyes as he began to openly rejoice and praise Yahweh.

*“Yahweh, now let your servant depart in peace, according to your word: for with my eyes I have seen your salvation, which you have prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel.”*

As Simeon handed the infant back to Mary, he blessed Joseph and Mary. Then he prophetically told her, “*Behold this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; (yea, a sword shall pierce through your own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.*”

Joseph and Mary had slowly worked their way through the crowds until they were just inside the entrance of the Temple as they marveled and talked about all the things that Simeon told them about the child. Before they could leave a prophetess named Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher saw them and went to them. She was very old, having lived with a husband for seven years and had been a widow for eighty-four years. She had served Yahweh with fasting and prayer day and night and never left the Temple. She was drawn to them and seemed to gasp in astonishment as she looked upon the child. Then she raised her voice for all to hear as she too gave thanks to the Yahweh for sending the Christ. After she left them, she stopped to speak with everyone she knew that looked for the redemption of Israel, telling them she had seen the Christ that day in the Temple in Jerusalem.

Joseph and Mary finally left the Temple with Jesus. They were filled with wonder as Yahweh had spoken to others about the special purpose this child was born to fulfill. It further confirmed in their hearts and minds that the infant Jesus was truly the Son of Yahweh.**29**

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About six months later, as the Feast of the Passover came, both Mary's and also Joseph's parents and most of their brothers and sisters came to worship in Jerusalem. It was very convenient that Bethlehem was so close so they could all stop by the home and see the new baby. As each looked upon the child, they closed their eyes to thank Yahweh and praise Him for sending the Christ. Those of her family were not concerned at what others thought. They had finally come to believe what Mary had told them of the child's conception and birth. It was such a grand homecoming and made even more special when Mary's cousin, Elisabeth came by with her husband, Zacharias, and her son, John, who was now one year old. John came to Mary's side while she was holding the baby, Jesus. Both looked at each other for a moment and then smiled. Jesus reached his right arm out toward John. Then John reached over and took Jesus's right hand with his right hand. Then to everyone's amazement, both children made gibberish sounds and they both seemed to shake each other's hand like two men who had just reached an agreement. The whole room broke out in laughter. The two children let go of each other's hands and pulled their arms back. Then they looked around at everyone, smiled, and began to laugh as well.

"I don't know what they agreed about, but I am sure we will find out in the years to come," Mary said when the laughter calmed down. To this, another round of laughter ensued.

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## Chapter 16

### **The Arrival of the Magi**

Joseph was able to get his construction business going much faster and easier than he imagined possible. While they were staying in the stable, he did some repair work for the innkeeper on the tavern and stable. While doing so he was able to meet several prominent men of the community. Both had prospered and their families had outgrown their homes. Together, they took him to the outskirts of the city to show him the two parcels of land where they wanted to have houses built. After talking with each of them and determining what kind of houses interested them and the makeup of the families, Joseph put together some ideas for houses and presented them to the men. One of the men was a bit skeptical after he learned that Joseph was from Nazareth. However, the other man enthusiastically backed him providing an account to draw from for materials as well as to pay for labor. Joseph was able to find one man who had experience building and then found several good laborers who were willing to learn the building trade. It took six months to finish the first house. It was such an overwhelming success that the second man then backed him to build his house. After that, Joseph was as busy as he could be and after a year was able to move his family into a much larger house, he had also built just for them and to put up family members who stopped by as they were going to nearby Jerusalem.

While Joseph was hard at work building and repairing houses, Mary kept house and attended to the infant, Jesus. He grew quickly and was very inquisitive. When Mary turned her head where she could not see him for even a minute, she would find that he had crawled from the blanket she placed on the floor for him to play on to every part of the house. She even found him in the washroom in

a bin she used to hold Joseph's soiled work clothes before washing. He loved to play with small wooden toy animals and small tools carved from wood that Joseph had made for him. Mary was glad Joseph had made a sturdy door with a high latch the child could not reach to keep him out of the workshop. He was walking by the time he was ten months old. Not long after that his gibberish baby talk began to sound words that Mary could understand. He would say 'Fa' when Joseph came in from work and 'Ma' when Mary picked him up and began feeding him. By the time, he was almost a year and a half he was putting words together to communicate with them. He would ask for a 'dink' and 'fut' for something to drink and eat when they ate together at the table. He would say, 'Ya' for yes and 'Na' for no.

One of the things Mary like most while living in Bethlehem was that she was able to see her cousin Elisabeth more often as they lived much closer to each other. Elisabeth always brought her small son, John with her on her visits. John was only six months older than Jesus was but stood over a head taller. He was a strong child and the hair on his head was long and bushy. Both boys enjoyed playing together and climbing the rock pile behind their house. Mary was often able to travel to Elisabeth's home bringing Jesus with her so the boys could play together there among the trees that were next to their home.

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Preparation and the journey from the city of Asaac to Jerusalem had taken almost two years as their caravan could hardly make ten miles each day. However, the Magi from Parthia were of a very patient disposition. A week before they reached the ford, they were



going to use to cross the Euphrates River, they sent messengers to meet with Roman border guards on the trade route to explain that they were on a mission of peace. The Roman guards were very nervous as they saw the large entourage approaching especially the armed soldiers. The Roman border guards stopped them and told them that they must go straight to King Herod in Jerusalem before going elsewhere in Roman territory. They calmly agreed and after giving the Roman guards a gold coin each in gratitude for their assistance, they continued on toward Jerusalem.**30**

They questioned those they passed along the roadway. They were somewhat surprised that the local citizenry seemed to be ignorant of the great event that had happened nearly two years before. The people kept asking, “What great event?” To which they replied, “Don’t you know? Your King was born, the King of Jews and all mankind. We have seen his star and are come from the East to worship him.”

As the large entourage began to make a final push toward Jerusalem, they noticed that the star was no longer shining before them on the horizon. They almost began to wonder if they would in fact find the newborn King in Jerusalem. None of the travelers with the Magi were familiar with the surrounding cities near Jerusalem. Only the Magi’s faith in Yahweh kept them going with surety that they would eventually find the Christ. Protocol demanded that they appear before the chief magistrate over each Roman province they entered and, in this area, it was King Herod in Jerusalem. They decided that after they paid their respect to him, they would finish their journey to find the King who had been born two years previously.

When Herod who was king in Jerusalem heard from a messenger of the border guards, he was very troubled and all Jerusalem with

him. Here was a group of very important people from Parthia and to make things more troubling there was a large contingency of soldiers they said were simply accompanying them to protect them. However, the greatest threat to him was these people were saying that a new king, the Christ, had been born right under his nose that he feared would eventually supplant him. Herod called the chief priests and scribes and demanded they tell him where this king, this Christ, should be born. After consulting the scrolls containing prophecies of the Holy Scriptures, they told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea. For it is written by the prophet, *‘And thou, Bethlehem, in the land of Judea, art thou not the least among the princes of Judea; for out of you shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.’*”

King Herod then privately called for the leaders of this visiting group to come to speak with him. After exchanging cordial greetings and hearing they had come in peace to worship the new king, he asked them when they had first seen the star that was leading them. After learning it had been two years, he told them what the priest had told him that this ‘king’ would be born in Bethlehem a small city just north of Jerusalem. Then he said, “Go and diligently seek the young child and when you have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.”

After their audience with King Herod, the Magi returned to their entourage greatly encouraged. As the sun began to near the western horizon, they saw the star appear, brighter than ever. It was to the north of where they stood outside of Herod’s palace. Everyone shouted for joy and did not want to wait until the next day. Immediately, they began to move in the direction the star pointed. The star was so bright it lit the way as they journeyed into the evening. Soon, the star was hovering directly above a house as they

all stopped and the three Magi climbed off their camels and went to the door.

After finishing their evening meal, Joseph had felt restless and did not want to go to bed at the time they normally retired. It seemed that Mary and the young child were also restless so Mary and Joseph sat in chairs talking while Jesus played on a blanket they had spread on the floor. It was quite late when they heard a knock on the door. Joseph went to the door and opened it.

He was astonished as he saw strangely dressed men standing before him and who eagerly began to try to look about him to peer into his home. Before he could ask them their business or even greet them, they gently but firmly began to push their way in. Then, as they laid eyes on the young child and his mother Mary, they all fell to their knees, bowing and worshipping the child in a strange language. Joseph and Mary could tell they were saying words of praise and adulation.

Joseph saw Jesus stand up beside his mother and his manner was nothing short of regal. He smiled and nodded to each person who came before him. Soon others entered the house bringing casks and chests that the three men placed at Jesus's feet. It seemed like they were going to run out room to set them all on the floor as the blanket was too small to contain them all. Each of the three men took turns as they opened the casks and chests revealing their treasures. Gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh worth a fortune lay before Jesus and his family. It was all so wondrous that Joseph and Mary could not help from feeling that there should have been a crown on Jesus's small head.

Finally, the Magi began speaking in Aramaic, which Joseph and Mary understood. The three Magi excitedly told them how an angel

had announced the birth two years before and then had led them to this very house. Afterwards while they talked, the servants of the travelers brought some wine and food into the house for a special celebration honoring the child and his family. It was quite late when they finished eating and the young child had fallen to sleep on a blanket on the floor amidst piles of gold coins next to casks and chests containing vessels holding expensive frankincense and myrrh. Then the mood became more serious.

“It is very important to our people, the Parthians, to know some things that you may be able to tell us,” Lux the chief Magi began.

“What is that you wish to know?” Joseph responded.

“Can you tell me of your lineage? Both of you, please.” He asked.

“Both, Mary’s and my own parents are of the lineage of David,” Joseph answered.

“Please, this is very important. Exactly which line, Zerah or Phares?”

“In our tongue we say Pharez instead of Phares,” Mary clarified. “Both our parents’ lineage comes from David through Pharez.”

“Ah, just as we thought,” Lux said as he looked at the other two Magi while they nodded their heads.

“You see,” Rav began, “male children of that particular lineage are eligible to be elected to the throne of our Parthian Empire. In our culture, our Emperors are elected from our two ruling houses, the Arsacids and the Megistanes, of which we Magi belong to the house of the Megistanes. Joseph, Mary, I must inform you that this child is heir to the throne of Parthia.”**31**

“From our Holy Scriptures we are told that He is heir to become King of Israel and even King of all kings eventually,” Mary interjected, “So, what are you concerned about?”

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“Our Emperor Phraates IV since his ascension to the throne has set about to kill all male heirs to the Parthian throne that he discovers. He has already killed over two dozen brothers of his and even his own father,” Mors related as both Joseph and Mary cringed and gasped in concern.

“This is why it is our goal to ensure your son’s birth remains a secret to our countrymen except a very few select Magi we can trust. We have brought this treasure to honor your son’s royal bloodline to all thrones and as a means for you to help ensure his survival,” Lux noted.

“While we may be able to assist you in this matter as far as our country is concerned, I fear the same evil that we have seen in our country may be developing in yours,” Lux told the couple.

“What do you mean?” Joseph asked as his hands tightened with determination to protect the child who was placed under his care.

“You may soon need to put some of this treasure to use as I believe his life may be in peril from another source. We were forced by the treaty between Parthia and Rome to visit the reigning monarch of this region before journeying into other places in Judea. I saw something evil in the eyes of King Herod in Jerusalem. It seriously troubles me. Well, this has been such a monumental occasion for us all. We will talk more on the morrow. Then, it will be with great joy that we will take knowledge of the birth of Christ with us on our journey home. We have heard of this from Yahweh’s own angel and now we have seen it with our own eyes.” Finally, each of the Magi touched the sleeping child, said a word of praise and thanksgiving to Yahweh, and then made his way out of the house.

Joseph and Mary thanked each one as they left. As they closed the door, they looked at each other in amazement. There was Jesus lying on a blanket that was literally covered with gold coins. Nearby

were vessels and other containers for the very expensive myrrh and frankincense. Mary picked Jesus up and placed him in his small bed. They put the piles of gold coins from the visitors back into the chests. Joseph looked out the window and saw the lights in the Parthians tents go out one by one while several of the guards were standing sentry around the camp and even about his own house. No need to worry about the treasure tonight, Joseph thought. Then he and Mary lay down in their bed. They were exhausted and finally ready for sleep. Their minds continued to race with thoughts about what had happened as they fell asleep. **32**

All three Magi quickly went to sleep in their tents but all began having the same foreboding dream. In the dream, they saw soldiers of King Herod killing small children and infants. Swords dripping with blood were slashing and hacking the innocent young children to death mercilessly. It so disturbed them that they awoke just after midnight covered in sweat. Each decided some fresh air might help them go back to sleep and hopefully more peaceful dreams. Within minutes of each other, they found themselves standing before the fire in the middle of the camp. One began to tell the others of his terrible dream to which the other two were shocked to discover that each had experienced the same dream. They all felt this was a warning from Yahweh to not go back and tell Herod where the child was. There was a very great sense of urgency as they quietly went and told the others of their entourage to quickly get up and prepare to leave the country.

Mors went to Lux and asked, “Should we not go to the house and tell the parents our concern?”

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Lux responded, “That will not be necessary as our Yahweh has spoken to them as He has done to us. See those lights in the windows of their house? They are already making haste to leave as we are.”

When the servants had everything packed, the three Magi climbed aboard their camels and the group headed out due north by a different route away from Jerusalem. Before the sun rose in the eastern sky, they had long departed leaving hardly a trace that they had ever been there.

Joseph also had had a dream. In it, the angel, Gabriel, told him with urgency, “*Arise, and take the young child and his mother and flee into Egypt and remain there until I bring word; for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.*” Joseph awoke startled. He got up and looked out the window to where the Parthians had camped. To his surprise, he saw that the Parthians were busy quickly gathering their things, breaking camp, and preparing to depart. He knew why they were leaving. He quietly awakened Mary and cautiously told her of the dream. He did not have to convince her of the urgency. She quickly got up, dressed, and after looking out the window and seeing the Magi and their party from Parthia also quickly packing and breaking camp, she also began to gather things they needed to take.

Joseph went out to the pen where his livestock was kept. He harnessed two strong oxen to the same wagon he had used to bring his family from Nazareth to Bethlehem. The wagon was quickly loaded. He left a note for the foreman of his work crew telling him that he could have the house and all its furnishings and animals in the pens and sheds were his as well to use and enjoy. Also, he was instructed to take over the business and run it as his own. The note

also said, Joseph and the family were returning to their hometown because of a family emergency and would not be returning. They loaded the casks and chests of treasure underneath other household goods, clothes, and blankets. At last, Mary picked up their sleeping child and climbed into the wagon while Joseph placed the last of their possessions on top. Finally, the three of them departed toward Egypt under the cover of darkness. **33**

It was several days before Herod realized that the Magi had mocked him by not returning to report the whereabouts of the ‘new born king’. He thought he was being so crafty in dealing with them. Now he was enraged and, in his wrath, sent soldiers to the town of Bethlehem with orders to slay every male child up to two years of age, which was the time of the star’s first appearing, which he had diligently, inquired of the Magi. **34**



Part Four:  
Living in Egypt Then in  
Nazareth

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## Chapter 17

### **Living in Egypt**

As Joseph neared the border, he had Mary put the child, Jesus under the blankets inside the covering over the wagon. He was stopped by the border guards and after pleasantries and a gift from Joseph of a gold coin to each of them, he was allowed to continue on his way. After traveling several miles along the roadway into Egypt. He passed through several settlements and finally after half a dozen settlements, he decided that the one they were now passing through was the place to stop. Then Joseph carefully used some of the treasure to rent a dwelling so the family could live quietly and obscurely. The small village was over a day's travel from the border of Judah.

“So that must be why Yahweh wanted us to stay in Bethlehem,” Joseph said to Mary as they were unpacking the wagon at their new home. “He knew the Magi would be coming and it would be easier for them to find us there.”

“It was also a lot closer to safety in Egypt than traveling all the way from Nazareth,” Mary added.

“Thanks to the Magi we have the means to live here in Egypt until Yahweh tells us it is safe to return to our home in Bethlehem,” Joseph thought aloud.

“There is much treasure, yet I think Yahweh blessed us with it for more than just meeting our needs. Think about it, Joseph. The Magi gave their gifts to our son, Jesus, not to us,” Mary said. “We must keep as much as possible for him. It may be that when he grows up, he will need it for his mission in life.”

“I agree,” Joseph replied, “I have never taken anything from anyone that I have not earned. Well, except what Yahweh has blessed me with which is certainly more than I could ever deserve. I have prayed to Yahweh that He will continue to give me the strength and ability to earn a living and care for my family and others. Remaining here less conspicuously will require that I find some kind of work while we are here.”

“Let us ensure that the treasure is secure so no one will know of it or ever find it while we are here in Egypt,” Mary said.

With Mary on the lookout, Joseph dug a hole in the hard-packed dirt floor of a storage room in the back of the house. After placing the bulk of the treasure in the hole, he filled the hole up and placed a large trunk over it. After surveying his work, he was sure that no one entering the room would be able to tell that anything was concealed in the floor even if they moved and looked under the trunk.

Joseph soon found work with an Egyptian who was also a builder. Joseph discovered that the Egyptians used different tools, methods, and even materials to build houses and other buildings. He was eager to learn their way of construction and worked hard. He also shared his knowledge of the building trade with them. Using both sets of skills, they were able to not only more quickly complete the work they were doing but also improve its quality and add numerous features other builders simply had never seen before and did not know how to provide. They prospered and soon had to double their laborers to try to keep up with demands as their business grew. The builder grew more impressed with Joseph with each day. As the weeks came and went, he rewarded him well. Soon, Joseph was a lead man and then a foreman. The owner wanted to make Joseph a partner in his construction business, however, Joseph told him that

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their abode in Egypt was only temporary and that one day perhaps soon, he would have to return to Israel to help his relatives there.

During the months that quickly passed a year, Joseph and Mary as well as the child, Jesus, learned the language of the Egyptians as well as their culture. Soon, Jesus was playing with Egyptian children. Mary marveled, as she would watch Jesus as he went about finding things to do that were interesting and fun. The other children, some a couple of years older, seemed to form a line following him from one activity to another. It reminded her of a childhood memory in which she watched a mother duck swimming in a stream while a dozen little ducklings followed in a line behind her. When the mother duck turned to the left or right, the little ducklings formed an arc following their mother. She laughed as she remembered seeing the mother duck suddenly stop and all the little ducklings bumped into each other down the line to the last little duckling, as they were not able to stop in time.

Mary quickly made friends of the women in her neighborhood and they would talk as they washed clothes at the fountain and help each other keep an eye on the children playing about them. Mary would take Jesus with her when she took Joseph his midday meal several times a week. They would sit on a slab or bench and eat together as he would try to explain the intricacies of the work that was taking place. Jesus would pick up a hammer, chisel, and peck on some stones as he had watched the men doing when they arrived at the building site.

Later one evening after supper, Joseph was sitting with Mary as they watched Jesus playing on a rug in the center of the room.

“When we return to Israel, I want to use some of the ideas and methods the Egyptians use in my construction business,” Joseph told Mary.

“How much longer do you think we will have to stay here?” Mary asked.

“Are you not happy here?” he asked without trying to answer her question.

“Of course, I am happy here. I would be happy anywhere I was with you and our family. It is just, I miss our families, and friends back home. Egypt will never feel like home to me,” she answered.

“When the time is right, we will return. Herod is an old man. Surely, he will not live too much longer. Perhaps then, we can return to Bethlehem. Then you can see a lot of Elisabeth and Jesus can play with John,” Joseph said as he tried to give her hope.

Many more months passed as well as years until one night the angel, Gabriel, again appeared to Joseph in a dream and told him, “Arise, and take the young child and his mother. Return to the land of Israel.” Joseph awoke the following morning and saw Mary was already up and preparing breakfast for her family.

“Mary,” Joseph said as he rose from the bed. “I had another dream.”

“Oh,” Mary said as she turned toward him while continuing to stir a pot in the fireplace. “What was it about?” She swung the pot out of the fireplace, picked it up, and set it down on a worktable near the fire. She went over to him. He just sat on the side of the bed not saying anything.

“Come on, you must tell me,” she pleaded. She was not being impatient, but had a suspicion that things were about to change again.

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“The angel, Gabriel, told me that Herod is dead,” he said to her, “it is time for us to return to our homeland.”

Mary jumped with joy when she heard the news. She had made the best of keeping the house, fixing meals, making clothes for the family while living there in Egypt, but it was just different from being in Israel. She did not want to wait to start packing. However, Joseph told her he needed to give the Egyptian notice of his intent to leave so there could be a smoother transition at the building site. Joseph had worked his way up to being the foreman of the biggest of three work crews so leaving was more complicated than if he was only a laborer.

Joseph went to the Egyptian he had worked for and told him that he had received word that his family needed him to return there so he had to leave. The Egyptian was sorry to see him go and tried to talk him out of it or quickly returning after addressing the need of his family by offering him a full half ownership of the business. Joseph expressed appreciation for the offer and the kind treatment he had been given but that he must return to his homeland and his kin. The Egyptian said he understood how important it was being at home with family as it was to him as well. Arrangements took nearly two weeks for Joseph to leave the construction site in the hands of a new foreman over his work crews. His employer told him that if he ever needed a job; to return here, for he would always be welcome.

Just before the wagon was packed, Joseph went to the market to get some things for the trip back to Israel. While there, he heard some men talking about things that were happening in Israel and about the new ruler in Judea. Joseph’s brow creased with concern when heard one of the men tell the others that the new ruler in Judea was Archelaus, the son of Herod. Joseph did not say anything about

what he heard when he returned to the house. They would spend their last night in Egypt, sleeping together in their bed and load it and a few more things in the wagon in the morning.

The three of them were snuggled together in bed when Jesus asked, “We goin hom?”

Mary smiled at him and answered, “Yes, dear. We are going home. Now, close your eyes and sleep. We have a busy day ahead of us tomorrow.”**35**



## Chapter 18

### **Returning to Nazareth**

They made really good time as they began their journey. As the miles passed by on their first day of travel just after crossing the border, Joseph became concerned and uncomfortable about going back to Bethlehem. He was not sure what to do and decided to sleep on it. Just before dusk on the first day of travel, they pitched a tent near the border and prepared to spend the night. That night, the angel, Gabriel, again appeared to Joseph in a dream. “Do not return to Bethlehem. Archelaus is well aware of his father’s concern about a new king being born in Bethlehem and has many spies there watching to see if anyone returns to that city with a small male child that would have been two years of age or younger when his father had ordered the killing of the male children in Bethlehem.” Joseph did not awake but rather continued to dream. In his dream, he saw soldiers slashing small children with swords and stabbing them with spears. Mothers were crying out helplessly watching their tiny sons unmercifully being hacked to death with swords. Joseph tossed and turned and moaned in anguish at the horrible spectacle of his dream became the worst nightmare he had ever experienced.

Finally, Joseph’s turning and moaning woke up Mary. She began to shake Joseph, “What’s wrong? Wake up.” she continued shaking him to get him to wake up. When she saw that Joseph was now awake, she said, “You have been moaning and twisting as if you were having a terrible nightmare.”

“Nightmare? Yes, it was horrible. But there was more that I dreamed,” Joseph said shaking his head and then put his hands to his face and shook himself. He dropped his hands and looked into Mary’s eyes, which he could barely make out, as the sun was just about to rise above the eastern horizon. “I had two dreams. In the

first, Gabriel warned me not to return to Bethlehem. Herod's son, Archelaus reigns in Judea. He plans to complete what his father had failed to accomplish. Then my second dream turned into a nightmare as I saw what Herod had done in having his soldiers slaughter male children two years of age and younger, trying to kill the Christ."

"Oh, my goodness, that is terrible. But now the angel tells us not to return to Israel? Oh well, I guess it was too good to be true. Things must have changed and now Yahweh continues to provide for our safety. We can return to our settlement in Egypt. However, I would like for us to get a larger house. You can get your old job back..." Mary droned on as Joseph sat beside her thinking.

"No, wait. Mary. I have a better idea," Joseph interrupted her and said as an idea solidified in his mind, "The angel told me that we must not return to Bethlehem, not Israel. I think it is time to return to Nazareth. It has been several years since we left there. I will see how things are and we can decide whether to settle back down there or perhaps find a place in Capernaum."

"Nazareth! Oh Joseph, that would be so wonderful. Oh, you don't know how much I have wanted to go back to our home in Nazareth since we left there years ago to go to Bethlehem and then the years we spent in Egypt. I just know everything will work out just fine. I can hardly wait to get there and see my mother and father and our old friends and family," Mary said beaming with a smile from ear to ear.

Joseph reached out and pulled her close to him and both wrapped their arms around each other. "I too am anxious to return home. It was good living in Bethlehem but it will be good for us to be closer to both our parents as our family grows." Mary caught the twinkle in Joseph's eyes and wondered if he somehow realized that she was again with child. This time, Joseph would be the father as he had finally consummated their marriage while living in Egypt after Mary

had assured him it was the proper thing to do. She wanted to be one with her husband from that time onward.

After breaking camp, they turned on a road that went northward away from Jerusalem and toward Nazareth. The days of traveling finally ended just before sunset as they entered the town of Nazareth and they went directly to the home of Joseph's father. His mother greeted them after she opened the door. After hugging his mother, he started toward his father who was sitting in a chair with his right foot propped up.

"Father, what has happened to you?" Joseph exclaimed as he walked toward his father. Then he saw Joseph of Arimathea sitting at the family table to the right of the fireplace and stopped. "Joe, Uncle Joe, where did you come from?"

"Jossi," Joe said as he rose and hurried over to him. "I was just talking about you and wondering how to find you. I just got here after stopping by Bethlehem looking for you."

"It's been, what four years?" Joseph said, after they hugged each other.

"A mind like a steel trap. How do you keep track?" Joe replied, "I have been at nearly every port all the way to the pillars of Hercules where the Mediterranean enters the great ocean." Then he paused and peered at the two people who were standing near the doorway with Joseph's mother. "Mary, is that you? Who is that with you?"

"Uncle Joe, this is our son, Jesus," Mary beamed as she coaxed the child to stand in front of her.

Joe went to them and dropped to his knees and put his hand on the child's shoulder. "You don't know me yet, but I have heard so much about you," he said as tears welled in his eyes. He took one of Jesus's small hands and touched it to his lips and then to his forehead. Then

he wrapped his arms around him, hugging him and then picking him up. Jesus just smiled and laughed as Uncle Joe began to swing him in circles.

The door was closed and everyone gathered around the table. There was so much to talk about as Joseph's mother began carrying food from the fireplace to the table. Mary went and helped serve the food. Joseph's father told him that he was recovering from an injury at a work site a few days before. A scaffold came apart and he fell about ten feet and had hurt his back and right leg. At that time, no one really knew if the injuries would leave him permanently crippled and unable to work. He had been worrying about what to do if he could no longer oversee the construction work. He said this must be an answer to his prayers as Joseph had returned home just in time. Bedding pallets were prepared and placed on the floor for those who did not have a bed to sleep in that night.

The next morning, Mary took Jesus with her and walked to her family's house nearby. Joseph and Uncle Joe busily filled in the details of their lives since they had last seen each other. Mary's mother picked up Jesus in her arms and her father wrapped his arms around her mother and the child in her arms. Mary told her parents of all that had happened to them since they had last seen them in Bethlehem and their stay in Egypt. As they had told Joseph's parents, she told her parents that nothing must be told to others of Jesus's birth in Bethlehem fearing word might get to Jerusalem and King Archelaus of Judea.**36**

## Chapter 19

### **Thoughts of the Young Jesus**

As Jesus grew older, he occasionally thought of his past. Unlike other children, he could clearly remember seeing his cousin, John when he was only six months old. Sometimes he felt that he should remember more important things that happened long before even that time. When he told his mother about his memories, she was amazed that he remembered such things while he was so young. She and everyone else she knew could hardly remember things before age three or four.

One of his fondest memories was when he was two and the night the strange men had come to their home in Bethlehem. These men had bowed down touching the floor with their foreheads before him. Somehow to him it seemed it was the proper thing for them to do. He was not afraid of them. In his mind, he could not remember ever feeling afraid of anything. He liked the bright and shiny coins they presented to him after his mother had placed him on the blanket on the floor of their house. He played with them as his mother and father talked with the men. He began to realize that if he concentrated, he could remember nearly everything that happened in the past. While he was a child, he did not try to remember anything before age six months but he was often aware that there was a lot more to remember when it was time for him to do so.

Many times, when he slept, he had wonderful dreams. In his dreams, he began to fly high above the mountains and the trees. As he grew older, in his dreams, he began to travel above the clouds and even beyond the bright dots in the sky he saw after the sun would drop below the horizon. He saw beautiful winged beings, incredibly decorated palaces, halls, spacious rooms, and the most wondrous of it all, a majestic platform with two thrones. He could see that on the

throne on the right side from his perspective sat someone in a blazing white robe but he could not quite make out the face that shown like the sun in its full strength. He would walk toward this throne on a surface that was translucent as clear ice, but each time he reached the steps when he raised his foot to step up toward the raised platform holding the two thrones, he would suddenly awake. He would lie still, think about his dream, and slowly drift back into sleep again until something woke him; usually it was his mother each morning.

Other than his dreams, Jesus's world included his home, the pathways to the market, the fountain where clothes were washed, and then there was the longer path to where he saw his father working with other men building things. He found that his days were somewhat routine, whether in Bethlehem, Egypt, and now Nazareth. He spent most of his time with his mother. She was careful to not allow Him the opportunity to go on adventures beyond her watchful eyes. He was not even one year old when he learned to walk. Soon, he was scampering around playing with other small children about the fountain where his mother washed clothes or went with his mother to the market or to visit others at homes near their own. He really enjoyed seeing the sun near the top of its arch in the sky for then he knew it was time to go with his mother to where his father worked taking him his mid-day meal. Just before the sun began to set, his father would return home, tired and dusty. He would wash off after removing his work clothes and toss them into a bin. Jesus remembered what fun it had been to slip into the other room and climb into the bin where his father's work clothes were. He would come back out to the main room where his mother and father were talking. He would point to some saw dust on his clothes and say, "Wok, dirdy coge." (Baby talk for 'Work, dirty clothes.')

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Other favorite times included when his cousin, John, came for a visit or when he and his mother went to John's home for a visit. John knew more words and helped teach him how to speak them more clearly, so he could be better understood by adults. Jesus thought John was very special. John was able to run faster, lift heavier things, and get a hold of things he could not reach. To Jesus, it seemed like it was hard for John to just have fun as he was always so serious and talked about serious things like adults. That was when John was just five years old and Jesus was four and a half.

Highlights of his memory seemed to grow even sharper after he had reached his second birthday. The night the strangers had come he had gone to sleep while his mother and father talked with them. He was awakened later as his mother had picked him up and placed him on a blanket to the side of the front room. A candle lit the room and he could see his mother and father carrying things out of the house. He was sleepy and went right back to sleep only to be awakened again by his father picking him up, wrapping him in the blanket, and then carrying him out of the house. His father handed him to his mother sitting on a bench at the front of a wagon loaded with their household goods. His father then climbed aboard and with a soft voice commanded the oxen to move forward.

He looked out of the blanket. It was still dark. The moon lighted the pathway they were traveling. He looked up at the large orb lighting the night sky. Then he tried to focus on the stars that were shining. They were so bright. He smiled as he remembered the dreams of traveling past the stars. He extended his small hand out of the blanket as he suddenly felt that he had a very long time ago actually reached out and.... No, his memory suddenly became clearer. He had not simply touched them; somehow... he had made them!

“Stay in the blanket, Jesus,” Mary told him as she put his small hand back into the blanket wrapped around him, “the night air is cool and you need to stay warm.”

Jesus settled snugly in his mother’s arms as the wagon jolted along. His eyelids felt very heavy and began to fall. It was nighttime. It was time to sleep. Why were they on a wagon and when would they be getting back home? His wondering stopped as his dreams began and he slowly breathed in and out, as he slept.

After several days of traveling in a wagon by day and sleeping in a tent by night they entered a city. It was a different kind of city from what he had known. The people all talked a different language. He had always listened as adults talked. He paid close attention to his mother and his father. He had looked at markings on tablets of stone. The writings in this new place were different. Soon, they entered a house. It had several rooms around an open place in the center. It was their new home. What an adventure. It had more rooms than the only house he could remember living in back in Bethlehem. Soon, the routine he had experienced before began to repeat, only in a different place. He liked playing with the children who lived nearby. The older children spoke differently but he was beginning to understand them.

He did not know how long they had lived in this new city but one morning when he awoke, he saw his mother and father carrying things out of the house. He went over to a window and looked out. There was the wagon again and it was nearly full. The only thing left in the house was his parent’s bed. That night he was happy as he climbed into a bed made with pillows and blankets with his parents. He had not done this for what seemed like a very long time. The next morning, he was awakened early and they began their



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journey. This time it was during the day. No stars or moon out, he thought, as the oxen slowly but constantly pulled the wagon down the pathway. Again, they slept in a tent at night. This journey seemed to take a much longer time. As they began traveling the second day, He noticed the people they passed by along the way spoke in the way he remembered from his first home.

As they traveled along Jesus, thought about things he was experiencing. Things just generally happened today, yesterday, or maybe a few days before that. He wondered about his memories of things in the past. Anyway, today was what mattered. As he thought about things, he reasoned: 'A person cannot go back to yesterday. Moreover, you cannot go into tomorrow until tomorrow becomes today.'

The journey seemed to go on and on until one day when he had been napping for a while that he felt the wagon stop moving much later than it usually did. He opened his eyes and saw that it had just begun to grow dark and they were in still another city. He searched his memory. No, he simply could not remember ever being in this city, or the house they had stopped at.

His father helped him down and then his mother and all three went to the door. His father struck the door several times before it opened. An older woman stood there and her face went from a somber expression to one of joy. She cried out something, grabbed his father, and hugged him. His father then went into the house and the older woman hugged his mother, then wrapped her arms around him, picked him up, and squeezed him shouting many things in a happy joyful sounding voice. Then his father was talking to an older man in a chair with one of his feet supported by a stool and then another

man got up from the table and grabbed his father in a hug. Then both of them were looking over toward him. The nice older lady had set him back down on the floor. He stood there quietly beside his mother taking everything in. His mother moved him in front of herself as the man who had hugged his father came over to him and dropped down on his knees so he could look at him much closer. After placing a hand on his shoulders, he spoke to him.

“You don’t know me yet, but I have heard so much about you,” he said. There was something he really liked about this man, Jesus thought. He smiled as the man took his small hand in his large powerful hand and put it to his lips. After he had kissed his hand, he touched it to his forehead and then slowly he wrapped his arms around him. Then he picked Jesus up and began to twirl him around while everyone including Jesus laughed.

Part Five:  
The Christ, From Age Three to  
Twelve

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## Chapter 20

### **Jesus Discovers His Deity**

The days quickly passed, and the family moved into a house there in Nazareth that his father told him he had built before Jesus was born. The daily routine began again in this new city. Jesus soon met other children that he could play with most days. As he grew older and could understand more words. His mother began to spend more time each day teaching him things. He did not know how to tell His mother that He already knew most of what she was trying to teach Him. His father began adding two more rooms to their home. Then his mother began telling him that their family was going to grow larger. She explained that in time, he would have brothers and sisters. He knew other families had several children so he was anxious to have other children he could play with in their family.

He had been visiting with his mother's parents for two weeks when his father, Joseph came to the house all excited. He took him back home and there he found his mother, Mary holding a very small baby.

"Jesus, this is your brother, James," Mary said to him. "James, meet your older brother, Jesus." Jesus reached out and took his brother's tiny hand in his. He saw his parents were beaming with happiness and he was very happy as well.

Jesus loved having a baby brother. As he watched his mother wash and dress him, he would ask if she did that to him when he was a tiny baby. She would answer yes. Jesus would play with the baby while Mary cleaned house or cooked food. He would watch after him at the fountain while his mother washed clothes. He took the responsibility to keep James out of trouble as the infant grew and was soon crawling about.

Jesus always got excited when his father, Joseph showed him how to make things in the workshop at their home. He was tall enough now to reach the latch on the door to the workshop, yet he was responsible and never went into the workshop without one of his parents giving him permission. He knew there were tools that could cut and things that could hurt someone that did not know how to properly use them. He also knew if he forgot to latch the door, his little baby brother, James might get seriously hurt.

When he was six, he began going to the synagogue where a rabbi taught boys the Tanakh and the Holy Scriptures. He quickly learned how to read the scrolls that contained books of the Old Testament of what would be called the Bible many years later. There was the Torah, the first five books written by Moses. Then there were the books of the kings, and books of the prophets, and finally books of songs. As he read, there was something very familiar about these books. As he grew older, he found himself actually knowing what the next chapter said before he even read it. He told his mother about this strange thing and other feelings he was having. He also began telling her about his dreams. His mother's face began showing concern as if she wanted to tell him something but then changed the subject to other things.

Just after he turned eleven, it suddenly struck him that something was odd in his family. He often watched his four brothers, James, Jossi, Judah, and Simon playing in the backyard. He would sometimes watch his oldest sister standing on a chair watching his mother prepare the evening meal while his youngest sister, who was still a young baby, was asleep in her crib. He looked at all their faces and then he looked into a mirror his mother kept in a drawer. One

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day as he often did, he took his father's midday meal to him and sat with him and ate a portion his mother had also fixed for him. He took quick looks at the features of his father, Joseph's face when his father was looking off in a different direction. There was something going on in the back of his mind that he could not quite grasp in his conscious mind. As he walked home alone, he began to take more notice of the boys he saw who were with their fathers. His thoughts finally began to focus in a way he could not ignore.

A few days later when it was actually quite peaceful in the house, he sat down in a chair at the table where his mother Mary was preparing the evening meal.

"Mother," Jesus began. "There is something on my mind that I am not able to fully understand. Yet, I need to talk to someone about what I have been thinking."

"Tell me about it, Jesus," Mary replied.

"I have seen that children all have some kind of a resemblance to their parents," he noticed that his mother had suddenly taken a deep breath and stopped working just after he had said 'resemblance to their parents'. He went on, "I see in my brothers and my sisters, features that come from you and father."

Mary stopped working and came and sat down in a chair next to him. She was not able to continue working on the evening meal. She knew it was time to tell Jesus something very important. She told him, "Go on. Tell me what you are thinking."

"I hardly know where to start. At school, we have been reading in the prophets. There are scriptures there that seem to speak to me. Mother, I often know what scriptures say even before I read them for the very first time in school. There are many things that I see that I feel like I have seen them before a very long time ago. Like, at night when I look up at the stars and the moon, I remember seeing them

before. I even recall looking down on the earth we are standing on. It is more than just seeing them in my dreams. Mother, I honestly feel like I have not only seen them before I have actually touched them. The stars, the moon, way out there. I have touched them before...no it is more than that. Somehow, I feel like I actually made them! It is like I was somebody before I was born and became myself.” The words came out as he looked into his mother’s eyes seeking some kind of reasoning, understanding, or at least reassurance. “Mother, when I look into a mirror, I can see some resemblances from you... but I cannot help from seeing that I do not have any resemblance to my father, Joseph.”

“Jesus,” Mary’s voice trembled with emotion. The time had finally come that she had dreaded for over eleven years. She quickly prayed that she would be able to say the right things to her son. “You are a very special child. You do carry the resemblance of your father. Your true father....You see... ah...ah....Before Joseph consummated our marriage...ah.”

“Mother,” Jesus smiled. Suddenly the truth of his parentage became crystal clear to him. “Do not fear. I now know the truth and who is my actual father,” he said as his eyes looked up toward heaven and then returned to his mother.

“How?” Mary asked thoroughly shocked, “How is that possible for you to know these things. No one has told you.”

“Yes, they have. I have been told in the writings of the prophets,” Jesus said to her, “I have finally realized the truth though it is hard for me to fully understand it all at this time.” He turned and looked at her and said firmly, “While you are my mother, I am sure that Yahweh in heaven is my father as sure as Joseph is the father of James, and my other brothers and sisters.”

Mary put her arms around him no longer able to refrain from crying as this great burden she had carried since his birth had just



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been lifted from her. Jesus held his mother in his arms as he also cried as well feeling and more completely understanding the burden his mother had carried since he was born. When she had settled down, she told him all that had happened to her and how he was conceived. Jesus smiled at her and nodded his head understanding all that she said.

“Joseph is the most honorable and just man of all I have ever known,” Jesus said, “And I am not just saying that because he has been my earthly father all these years. How hard it must have been for you both carrying this knowledge and fearing to tell others as few would have the grace and mercy of Yahweh to understand and accept its truth. Who else knows this truth?”

“I told your father, Joseph first. He had a very hard time initially accepting what had happened to me. I told my parents. Then while Joseph made up his mind, I visited my cousin, Elisabeth and stayed with her until after she gave birth to your cousin John. She actually knew that I was with child, you, before anyone told her. Yahweh told her. She told her husband, Zacharias. Finally, Joseph learned the truth in a dream and then we were wed. Oh yes, Joseph told his Uncle Joe, some call Joseph of Arimathea,” Mary answered. “Joseph’s parents know. Your brothers and sisters have been told but they do not fully understand what it means that you are the Christ.”

“Mother, do not fear others finding out. And, never feel anything but honor and esteem that you were of body, soul, and spirit that Yahweh had sought for thousands of years, so blessed, that this holy thing happened to you,” Jesus acknowledged.

“My son. My Elohim,” Mary said reverently again holding him in her arms as more tears formed in her eyes.

“Oh, Mother,” Jesus sighed. “There is so... so much that I must learn in this mortal life, oh, so much. I have begun to experience

new strength as I can now feel that within my being there is no doubt in my mind that I am the offspring of the Eternal Yahweh. From the prophets I have learned that I am here for a very important mission. One that will affect every person here on earth who ever lived or will ever live. There is so much I must learn, must experience, must do before my time is up,” Jesus said, as he looked upward.

“What do you mean, Jesus? What do you mean by ‘before my time is up?’” Mary asked suddenly very concerned.

“Don’t worry, Mother,” he tried to comfort her. “Many years from now things will happen that will trouble you for a short while and then you and others will turn from great sadness to incredible joy.”

With those words, Mary tried to put such thoughts out of her mind. The lingering concern she had had over telling Jesus of his miraculous conception and birth was now gone. She could not think that she loved him more than her other children, but there was something very special about him that caused her devotion to go beyond simply a mother’s love. That night she told Joseph what had happened. He was shocked at first but as he listened to her, he became more settled. He did not vary his behavior toward Jesus. He continued to basically treat him as he did any of his other children.

This was a changing point in Jesus’s life. Though he had just turned eleven years of age, his manner from that time forward was much like a man a decade older. His demeanor became much more serious and though he maintained a sense of humor such expressions became fewer as the years passed.

He took his studies in the Tanakh school far beyond that of his peers. He would ask deep questions of the rabbis that they were unable to answer. The rabbis at the school had to literally push him out the door after training sessions were completed each day otherwise, he would linger for hours. His thirst for not just

knowledge but rather understanding from the Holy Scriptures written on the ancient scrolls could not seem to be quenched.

His father, Joseph began to notice that Jesus's mind was often on other things than the tasks he was assigned to do to help at the construction site. One day, he gave Jesus several things to do that he thought would take at least an hour. He came back after a little over thirty minutes and found Jesus scratching things in the dirt.

"Jesus, those tasks were important that I gave you. Why are you writing in the dirt rather than working on the tasks you were given?" He asked him with a serious look on his face.

Jesus looked up with an equally serious look. "Yes, I understood the importance. That is why I completed them before taking a break. Father, have you ever wondered about...?" Jesus continued to ask about a certain passage in the Holy Scriptures but Joseph did not hear him. He looked over at the wall and saw the boards were cut and nailed in place in exactly the right manner.

"Oh, sorry," Joseph interrupted Jesus's words, "I did not hear what you were saying as I was very impressed at what you have done in so short a time." He went over to the wall and Jesus followed him. "I simply cannot figure how long something should take with you doing it. From now on after I tell you what I need you to do, I need you to tell me how long it will take you. Oh, and by the way. Also, plan how much time you need for other things, such as meditation.

"Father, sometimes, something comes to my mind that I must consider and work through. It may happen right in the middle of some task. However, if you say the task is very important, I will always complete the task before taking time on those things. I like to work a lot harder and smarter so I can get on with what is on my mind," Jesus said.

This brought a smile to Joseph's face. He ruffled Jesus's hair with his hand and turned to leave, and then hesitated as he spoke. "Jesus,

from this time forward, you have my permission to take as much time as you need to meditate and even write in the dirt whenever you feel the need. That comes first. When you have finished, then you can work on the tasks I have given you. I have about thirty minutes of work left to do to complete today's schedule and plans before quitting for the day. Will you be ready to head home by then?"

"Yes, Father," Jesus said as he returned to his writing in the dirt.

Joseph again smiled. He remembered his conversation with Mary as she had told him about talking with Jesus and how he had revealed that he knew the truth about his parentage. Jesus had always shown him the deepest respect and honor any parent could ever hope for from their children. It had not diminished since that time if anything it had grown even greater.

The house had quadrupled in size as Joseph had prospered and added to the house he had built before he and Mary had married. With each new child, he had added another room and enlarged the dining area and family room so all could be together for meals and evening devotions. He always kept an extra bedroom for guests coming in from out of town. They were also able to afford to have a woman come in each day to help with cooking and housework while Mary cared for the children.

One day, she heard someone come in the front door without knocking. She looked from the kitchen and saw it was Jesus. He was approaching his twelfth birthday. Strange she thought. Instead of coming to the kitchen to greet his mother as he usually did, he went straight to his room. This is most unusual, she thought as she went to his room to check on him. She tapped on the door just before she opened it. Jesus was at his desk his father had made for him years before. It had special legs that could be replaced by longer

ones as he grew taller. He was just sitting there, not reading, or writing, just sitting there.

“Jesus,” Mary said in a voice that expressed concern, “Is something wrong?”

Jesus turned to her and she saw bruises on his face, one of his eyes was beginning to blacken, and his clothing was torn and soiled with dirt. He began trying to answer her as he said, “I am having a bit of trouble trying to figure out why some older boys are always picking on me. I try to talk with them but they do not want to talk. All they want to do is this.” He pointed to his face.

“Oh, Son,” she said trying not to cry as she went to him and held his head softly in her arms. She thought, what can I say? Then she said, “Son, you will learn that sometimes people are just mean because they feel someone else is better than they are and that by attacking them and trying to put them down, that somehow makes them better. They think brawn is better than brains because they act just like brute beasts.”

“That makes sense,” Jesus said as Mary had released him and now sat on his bed facing him. Then he continued, “Still, I want to figure out how to deal with such people. Just being nice, doing everything they say, or even taking their abuse silently does not work. It actually makes things even worse. No amount of reasoning seems to work. It is like trying to hand a string of expensive and beautiful pearls to swine; they rip it from your hand and then try to gore you. Honestly, sometimes I think I would like to call down fire and brimstone from heaven to stop such evil behavior. Then I realize they are only stupid children and I hope they grow out of such wrongful behavior before it is too late. They will reap what they sow one of these days. The only thing that seems to work for me right now is to try to avoid such people.

Mary stood and patted him gently on the head and then hugged him before she left the room. Her thoughts were troubled. How could she or Joseph help their son with such a problem?

## Chapter 21

### **Jesus Reaches Age Twelve**

As in other years, when Jesus was twelve years of age, he went with his parents, siblings, and often their entire extended family to Jerusalem to attend the Feast of the Passover.<sup>37</sup> Joseph's and Mary's parents and kinfolk who were able, traveled together and when the sun was soon to set, they circled all the wagons. The women began fixing a meal while the men folk set up the tents to spend the night. It took the large group three or four days to reach Jerusalem.

Mary had arranged for her immediate family to stay with her cousin Elisabeth through the Feast of Unleavened Bread and then return home. Elisabeth and Zacharias had finally moved to a house in the northern section of Jerusalem after years of living in Juttah. During this time, they celebrated with good food and wine every day. During the Feast of Unleavened Bread, Joseph took the family, visited the stable at the inn in Bethlehem where Jesus was born. Without thinking on their way back to Elisabeth house Joseph suddenly realized that he had led their family by the house they had lived in for two years after Jesus's birth.

It had been ten years since Mary and Joseph with their baby, Jesus had fled during the night. All the kinfolk knew not to mention anything to anyone else about Jesus being born in Bethlehem. Nearly everyone they now knew thought that Jesus like his brothers and sisters had been born in Nazareth.

The man Joseph left the construction business with had done well. Unexpectedly, just as they passed by the house, this man came out

the front door. He closed the door and started walking down the road to go to the market that happened to be in the same direction they were going. Suddenly, he recognized Joseph. He quickly ran toward him shouting greetings.

Jesus had been standing by his father as this man drew near to their group. Joseph asked him to take charge of the rest of the family so they could see the rest of the town while he spent some time talking with this man. The rest of the family then went on and left Joseph so he could spend more time talking.

The man first thanked Joseph for the gifts he had left him and secondly that he had greatly profited from the business. He went on to say that he had saved a lot of money expecting to give it to Joseph when he saw him again.

He took Joseph's arm and tried to escort him back to the house where he had hidden the money. The house and construction business that Joseph had left him was truly a great treasure, he kept saying, and he wanted to give Joseph this money to pay him for the house and business he had left him.

Joseph told him that it had been and still was a gift to him and his family. If he wished to share this blessing then give the money to the poor and needy. The man marveled at the large family Joseph now had. He had yet to mention anything about his son, Jesus whom he knew had been born here in Bethlehem. Finally, the man talked more seriously about the past.

"My friend," he said, "Your departure spared your family from the horrible crimes that were committed here in Bethlehem."

"Tell me about it," Joseph asked seriously but not letting on that he knew what had happened.

"I have wished to forget it," the man replied, "but, you should know. I found your note the morning after you had left in the night. I was shocked but very pleased, as it was such a wonderful gift. I



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could never have afforded to own such as this house or the construction business you had built. I met with the other men and showed them the note. They accepted me as their boss and we continued to work together on the house you had started. I thought life was grand and my heart was full of joy.

“That all changed a few days later when the soldiers surrounded the city and then came charging in. They entered every house, but they did not ransack or take any of our possessions. To our horror, they took something more precious than gold. Every young male child from newborn babies to as old as two and some that were near three were taken into the streets and were hacked to pieces with swords and without mercy killed. The blood was everywhere. I have never heard such wailing and shrieks of anguish by both women and men. The howl lasted all day and night as parents tried to find the remains of their young children and then bury them. I started to thank Yahweh that my wife and I had no children but then I cursed Yahweh. How could Yahweh let such an evil thing happen to all the young children in our city?” The man broke down and began to weep.

“I am so sorry, my friend,” Joseph told him. “I had no idea that such a thing was to happen when I left. It was months before I heard some things but not the details about that horrible crime. Nevertheless, know this truth. Our Yahweh did not cause this terrible crime. The guilt belongs to King Herod and his soldiers who should not have obeyed such a heinously foul and ungodly order.”

“Joseph, did this thing happen because of your son? I remember that he was about the same age as the children who were slain after you left.” The man asked as he had stopped crying.

Joseph cringed. What should he say? Had he now placed his son, Jesus, in jeopardy having returned to Bethlehem? The look on his face told the man what he was unable to say in words.

“It does not matter. You do not have to say one word,” the man assured him, “I saw your son, Jesus, beside you when I first saw you passing my home today. I can still see what I remember of him from when you lived here. Finally, I am able to repent to our Yahweh for my bitter outburst toward Him after the children were killed ten years ago. I now thank Yahweh that your son Jesus was taken to safety before the soldiers came. Do not fear, Joseph. Your son is safe as far as I am concerned. I swear to you that I will die before I ever say a word that might place him in peril.”

Tears filled Joseph’s eyes as he embraced his friend, “Thank you for understanding. I could never thank you enough for your silence on this matter.”

The man smiled, “Your gift to me was an unbelievable blessing, but there is something special about your son that I cannot explain but simply seeing him fills my heart with joy. For me to see your son alive growing into a fine young man is worth more than any treasure a man could ever possess.”

Joseph could not help but say, “My friend. In time, you will come to know how really special Jesus is. Thank you from the depths of my heart and soul for your silence is a very great gift you are giving to my son as well as to me.”

They embraced once more and the man continued to the market full of joy. Joseph also was full of joy and realized that unknowingly going down the street in front of his old home in Bethlehem was not a mistake but was important to provide closure for both him and his friend.

Joseph caught up with the rest of the family who had toured the city. It was finally time for everyone to return home to Nazareth. All the kinfolk who had traveled with Joseph and Mary’s family gathered and then started out on the journey. As the sun neared the

horizon, everyone stopped and began to setup tents to spend the night. It was then that frantically, Mary ran up to Joseph as he was preparing their tent.

“Joseph!” she burst out, “I cannot find Jesus anywhere!”

“What?” He responded, “Did you check with your parents and mine?”

“Yes,” she answered.

“Then let us check again,” he said as he dropped his hammer, he was using to drive tent spikes into the hard ground.

The two searched the camp asking adults and children of their families and other groups who had stopped to camp there for the night if anyone had seen Jesus. Finally, they had to accept the fact that he was not with them. Joseph arranged for his parents to take their things and their other children on to Nazareth in the morning. He determined that he and Mary would return to Jerusalem to find their missing son. They did not wait for dawn but started back immediately as the sun went down on the horizon.

Through the night, they backtracked to Jerusalem arriving there as the sun began to break through the darkness announcing a new day was dawning. They went first to Mary’s cousin, Elisabeth’s home where they had stayed. She was alarmed as well but did not know where he could be. Zacharias, Elisabeth, Joseph, Mary, and even Elisabeth’s son, John began searching Jerusalem for Jesus. For three days, they all returned to Elisabeth’s home each night having failed to locate him or anyone who had seen him. Just as they were getting ready to go out on the fourth day, Elisabeth’s son, John came running to Mary and Joseph.

“I think I know where Jesus is,” he announced to them.

“Where?” Mary said with hope. John told them. Mary and Joseph looked at each other and simultaneously said, “Of Course.” They left the house and began walking as fast as they could. It took half an hour for them to reach the Temple. They entered and then as they came near the entrance of a large side room, they heard Jesus’s voice as well as that of others. Looking into the room, they saw Jesus sitting in the midst of a host of other men who wore the robes of priests and rabbis who specialized in the teachings of the Temple and Law of Moses.

They saw that Jesus would listen respectfully to what they were saying and then would answer their questions as they nodded in agreement with his words. However, when he asked them questions, they could not answer him. The rabbis and priests would look at each other with mouths wide open astonished at his understanding and ability to clearly and succinctly answer their hardest questions and then pose questions that they had tried unsuccessfully for years to answer. Finally, Mary could wait no longer and entered the room and went straight to Jesus. The room became quiet as she went up to Jesus, who stood up then she placed her hands on his shoulders.

“Son,” she said with a trembling voice, “why have you done this? Your father and I have searched all over Jerusalem for you for three days and feared for your life.”

“Why did you search for me? Didn’t you realize that I must be about my Father’s business?” Jesus answered her somewhat perplexed at her grief. She took his hand and led him out of the room. The rabbis and priests just sat there stupefied as they watched the mysterious child and his mother leave. **38**

Jesus went with them as they made their way back to Nazareth. Along, the way, Joseph, and Mary talked to each other and to Jesus about what had happened at the temple. Jesus was shocked when he finally realized how long he had been in the Temple.

“I find it very hard to realize that I had been in the Temple non-stop for three days and three nights,” he told his parents. “I knew we were getting ready to leave and I just had to run by the Temple and try to get a quick answer about a question I had concerning a passage in Jeremiah. As I came to that room in the Temple there were six men talking about that very passage and I went in to ask them about it. The next thing I know the room is full of men and then you are standing there. Mother, Father, I am so sorry I lost all track of time and caused you such grief.”

“I don’t know how I could handle losing you, Jesus,” Mary said trying but failing to form a smile on her face.

“Jesus,” Joseph said, “I have noticed for some time that your mind is often on other things. You still have much to learn and need to experience life as a child and grow up as normal as you can. In our society, a man must be thirty years of age before others will listen to him and respect him as being qualified to speak concerning the Words of Elohim.<sup>39</sup> You are still many years from reaching that age when others will acknowledge you as a man and not a child. What you experienced in the Temple was a rare exception, which will probably not be repeated. Men, especially those who are considered experts in the Law, priests, and rabbis, will not take lightly being humiliated by a child who exposes their true lack of knowledge, understanding, and wisdom.”

“Jesus, other children do not know how to deal with you,” Mary added. “You are always so serious. I think you frighten other children at times. To them you are like an adult but are in a child’s body.”

“I understand what you are saying and mean,” Jesus answered. “I will try to be more like other children, at least as much as I can.”

Jesus thought about his life as he looked out across vast landscape. They had reached the crest of a large hill and he could see for miles in every direction. He began wondering what he might see if he went in one direction and then in another. Facing westward, he thought about the great sea just beyond the horizon. He wondered about the lives of people that lived far away. His memory returned to one of the first and strangest experiences he had at least in this life. He thought of the Magi who had traveled so far from somewhere in the east that it took about two years to reach his family's home when they lived in Bethlehem. He thought about living in Egypt. Yes, that was when he first got a glimpse of the great sea as they travel to and from that city across the border. One day, he determined or rather acknowledged, he would see other places farther away than anyone could imagine.

## Part Six:

# The Christ Leaves Nazareth

$\mathcal{R}$  of  $\mathcal{D}$



## Chapter 22

### **Joseph of Arimathea Visits the Family**

As weeks turned into months, Jesus worked even harder with his father, Joseph and was obedient to all that his parents asked of him. In his mind, he often pondered his experience in the Temple in Jerusalem. He could feel a presence or power that flowed throughout his body and mind. He had already experienced some extraordinary things. While adjusting a brace that held a portion of a rock wall in place while the mortar set, a loose rock fell from the top and cut a gash in his foot. No one was around when it happened. He did not even make a sound right after it happened. He thought, ‘Oh no.’ But saw that no bones had been broken. Still, the wound was bleeding. He had wanted to complete this task so he could spend some time meditating on some scriptures. He placed his hand on the wound and then looked upward as he spoke in a soft voice no one on earth could hear.

“Father, in heaven, Yahweh, please reach down with your Holy Spirit and heal this wound in my foot.” Instantly, Jesus felt a warm sensation in his foot and the gash not only disappeared but the blood also vanished not even leaving a scar. “Thank you, Father,” Jesus finished his prayer and went back to work and soon finished the task.

A man is not recognized as a man until his thirtieth birthday, Jesus was thinking one day. What can I do, or rather what should I do with my life until I reach the age of thirty? I already know all the Holy Scriptures and can quote their entirety by memory. That’s pretty easy when you are the author of them. In my dreams, I have seen a warning that my life as well as that of my mother and Joseph and my brothers and sisters will be in peril here in Judea should I publicly present myself to others as Yahweh’s son. Only as I am a man of

thirty years or older will my parents and siblings be left alone and others will go after only myself. I know that there will be a time to minister to my people and teach them the way to salvation in this land. But I can hear the prayers of so many far away in strange lands. They are my people as well. Somehow, I must reach the lost sheep of the house of Israel who have been scattered across the entire face of the earth for thousands of years.

Two of Jesus's younger brothers were now working with his father at the new building site. He was assigned to teach them the trade while Joseph oversaw the entire project and arranged for material to be delivered on a timely basis. Jesus saw that his two brothers picked up everything in the construction trade almost as if it were second nature to them. How different it had been for him. In Jesus's mind, there was a flash of recognizing how certain traits were naturally passed by heredity from father to son. It further revealed that his actual father was not of this earth and that was why he was gifted to know and understand many things including the Holy Scriptures. He longed for something to happen that would change things in his life.

Without realizing it, he would not have long to wait.

Walking home from the work site with his brothers and his father, Joseph, Jesus heard a commotion as they neared their home. It sounded like some kind of celebration. Spontaneously, Jesus dropped his tools and began running. He ran the fastest as he recognized a man's voice in the house. It was his great uncle whom most people called Joseph of Arimathea, but he simply called, Uncle Joe.

“Uncle Joe, Uncle Joe,” Jesus screamed with delight as he flew through the open front door.

“Jesus, me lad,” Uncle Joe shouted as he grabbed the young child in a bear hug and then flung him in a circle around the room.

“You boys stop that right now!” Mary shouted as she tried to stifle her laughter at the sight. “You will break something.” She could not even look serious much less sound serious as she watched the joy in the faces of the two whirling around. Then the rest came in and all the boys tried to grab a hold of Uncle Joe. He finally shook himself free of the boys, then the two Joseph’s wrapped their arms around each other in a hug wherein each tried to squeeze a response of being bested by a stronger man. Finally, Uncle Joe moaned out a “STOP” as Jossi proved the stronger just like all the times before.

“It’s been so long Joe,” Jesus’s father, Joseph said with happy tears of joy in his eyes.

“Yes, but let us not think about that right now, Jossi,” Joseph of Arimathea said as he wiped tears of joy from his own eyes.

Soon the entire family was crowded around Uncle Joe as he told them of his exploits sailing throughout the Mediterranean Sea and now into the Atlantic Ocean all the way to the Isle of Briton. He told them about plans that were being made to cross the Atlantic in search of more deposits of ore needed by Rome.

“Is that where you picked up the funny sounding accent?” James asked him.

“You got me there, me lad. The people I have met in the Isle of Briton are a strange but gentle kind of people. I have been made welcome by the King who rules the land and have been given twelve sections of land near a city called Glastonbury. I am especially fond of the clans who live in the far north of our port city called Bristol. We could learn a lot from them,” Uncle Joe told the children.

Mary and the girls had to leave the boys and men in order to finish preparing the evening meal. In just a short time they were all seated around the large table enjoying the food.

“Mary, if I ever find a pretty woman who can cook as well as you, I would have to settle down,” Uncle Joe said as he finished his second plateful.

“Oh, hush,” Mary laughed. “The day you give up your voyages across the sea will be the day they place your body in a grave. That is unless they bury you at sea one of these days.”

After dinner, the two Joseph’s went out for a walk in the cool evening air. After talking about generalities, Jossi began to talk about something that was on his mind.

“I don’t know what to do about Jesus?” Jossi said.

“There’s a problem with Jesus?” Uncle Joe responded in amazement.

“No, not exactly a problem with him,” Jossi continued. “He has reached an age where he is beginning to see his ‘calling’. On the other hand, ‘mission in life’ might be a better way of explaining it. Remember, we talked about the whole story of his conception years ago. No one told him anything, but somehow, he figured it all out by himself after studying the prophecies in the scrolls containing the Holy Scriptures at the Tanakh school. He has shared with Mary dreams he has been having since he was about two years old. Joseph, there is no doubt. He is the Christ, Israel’s Christ our people have been waiting for all these years. The prophecies of where the Christ would be born and to whom, he has fulfilled them all. He knows this. But he is troubled about what he should do now. He realizes that he must be a man, thirty years of age to begin his ministry here in Judea and Galilee. But that is eighteen years from now.

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“Do you have any ideas?” Joe asked as his mind began thinking of possible alternatives he might recommend.

“Mary and I talked about sending him down to live with her cousin, Elisabeth. Her son John and Jesus really enjoy being together when we go to Jerusalem. But I don’t think that will solve anything really. He would end up spending all his time in the Temple and the things he would tell them would possibly create more problems than I can imagine.”

“Jossi, I have an idea,” Joe said as the wheels turned in his head. He explained his idea with Jossi for over an hour as they walked about. Returning to the house, they found all the children had gone to bed in their rooms so they sat down with Mary and Joe told her about his idea.

“I don’t want him to leave us,” Mary said as she felt a throb of pain in her heart. “Yet, I hate to see him as perplexed as he has been since we went to Jerusalem for the Passover.”

“I think it is a splendid idea,” a voice from the doorway said as Jesus came into the room. “I did not mean to eavesdrop but somehow I was suddenly awakened and then heard you talking about me. I think going with Uncle Joe to sea would be just the right thing for me at this time in my life.”

The four of them talked well into the night. Details were discussed. Jossi assured them that it would not be a problem not having Jesus working at the building site. In fact, he admitted that Jesus’s two younger brothers were already better carpenters than he had been or ever would be. “It’s not in his blood,” Jossi acknowledged while Jesus shook his head in agreement with a smile as he gave his earthly father a hug. Mary cried as she thought about her firstborn son leaving home. Jesus sat down next to his mother, Mary and assured her that she and the family would always be in his

thoughts and prayers. They finally concluded for the night and went to their rooms to catch what little sleep they might get before dawn.

The next morning as the family gathered about the table to eat, the news of Jesus leaving with Uncle Joe was announced. Jesus's two younger brothers wanted to go also but only if they could be home in time for dinner. Joseph sent word to the construction site with a list of things for the men there to do as he and the boys would not be there today. All day the entire family talked about Jesus going with Uncle Joe and sailing away around the world to exotic places Uncle Joe had told them about during his visits. In his room Jesus quietly packed a canvas bag with clothes to take.

"How long will it be until you return and I can see Jesus again?" Mary asked Joe.

"On my next voyage, I have to stop off in several ports around the Mediterranean Sea and then stop off in Rome to work out some details of what I am beginning. I might have to sail to the Isle of Briton before I can return from this trip. I expect it could be at least five to ten years. But, do not worry, I will see that Jesus sends letters to you regularly so you know he is doing just fine," Uncle Joe assured her.

"Are you sure Jesus will be safe on a ship on the high seas? What if there is a storm," she continued with concern.

"Mary, if I had any worry, I would let you know," he said and then laughed. "I have no doubts that our ship will actually be the safest ship on the sea with Jesus aboard. If some storm clouds come up, Jesus will simply blow them away."

"You just can't be serious, can you?" Mary said trying to sound angry and not laugh as she saw in her mind's eye what Joe had just suggested.

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“Yes, but it is hard. Honestly, Mary. Your son will come by for a visit on a regular basis and then he will return for good when it is the right time.”

The next day, Jesus and Uncle Joe began the first part of their journey by going to Arimathea. Uncle Joe wanted to spend some time with his mother, father, and the rest of his immediate family before continuing on to Joppa where the ship they would sail upon was docked. Jesus smiled as he thought to himself. Now, he could be whatever he wanted to be without worry about how it would affect his family back in Nazareth.

$\mathcal{R}$  of  $\mathcal{D}$



## Chapter 23

### **Jesus Sails Away**

Joseph of Arimathea spent just a few days over his two-week estimate in Joppa as he finalized preparations for his next trip abroad. He assigned one of his most trustworthy seamen, Ahmed, to teach Jesus the ins and outs of how to run a sailing ship. However, in private, Ahmed was told that his primary responsibility from that time forward was to watch over Jesus and keep him safe but busy while Joseph was minding the overall operation of the ship.

The morning the ship put out to sea was one of the most exciting events Jesus could remember and just slightly behind the time he spent in the Temple in Jerusalem nearly a year before. He would actually be going to places he remembered Uncle Joe talking about on his visits to the family from time to time. Jesus had a feeling that he was meant to go to those strange lands for an important purpose that was slowly forming in his subconscious mind. Soon Jesus was climbing the masts and letting out or pulling up sails. While he would soon be thirteen, his determination and effort were remarkable. He only needed to be told something once and he would never forget it. He picked up a lot just watching other seamen and then he would try it himself without being told.

Shortly after putting out to sea, Jesus enjoyed watching the sailors as they dropped lines over the railing of the ship down to the water to catch fish. When one was caught, it was exciting to see them tug on the line and eventually pull the fish over the railing. It would flop around all over the deck until one of the sailors caught it and club it to death. He learned the routine of what followed. After several fish were caught, they would be gutted and scaled on the deck before

being taken to the galley for further preparation and cooking. It had fallen on Jesus as a regular task to clean the decks after the fish were cleaned. It was a smelly unpleasant task but one that needed to be done and was usually given to the most inexperienced sailor. The seamen were used to the sailor who was given this task to loudly gripe and do a sloppy job. They were very surprised at how Jesus quickly and meticulously cleaned the deck day after day without complaint and always had a smile on his face.

One day, the seamen were complaining at not catching any fish, not even a nibble. Jesus had been watching them for several hours and finally asked if he could try. One sailor gave him the line he was using and sat back ready to make fun of him when he did no better than the rest. Jesus pulled the line up while rolling it on the spindle. A couple of times before they sailed, Uncle Joe had taken him out on the end of the pier to do some fishing. He taught him some tricks and they had caught several nice size fish. Remembering all he had learned he began to put it to use. He examined the hook and then took some plyers and bent the end point to make a tighter curl. Then he secured some scrap meat on the hook and lowered it into the water. After he had fully let out all of the line, he relaxed and waited. The other men near him had been only letting out about half of their line so they would not have to pull it for so long a time when they caught anything and get it into the ship. In just a few minutes, Jesus jerked hard on the spindle with both hands as the line went taut. Then he began pulling and rolling up the line. He continued doing this for some time and finally somebody called, "Get the net". The fish on the line was near the surface and several men lowered a net and secured the fish in it and pulled it onto the deck. It was what they all called a 'whopper' as big as the size of two or three of the regular fish they usually caught.

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“Tell you what, lad. You catch another one like that and you won’t have to clean the deck today,” the deck foreman told him.

Everyone cheered as Jesus put some bait on his hook and lowered it again all the way down. Rather than fishing themselves, they stood at the railing to watch Jesus. As soon as he stopped letting the line out, the line jerked and he again began to pull up his catch. He not only landed another whopper, he did it again two more times, and after the fourth, he told the men he had to rest for a while. He slumped into the center of a large coil of rope and watched the men as they began to clean the four very large fish he had caught. He dozed off and was suddenly awoken when he felt someone kick the coil of rope he was sitting on.

“Come on, stop lazing around, and get busy cleaning the deck!” he heard the deck foreman shouting at him.

“But you said if I caught another large fish, I would not have to clean the deck. I caught four, that’s double what you said. Why are you going back on your word?” Jesus said somewhat confused.

“Don’t argue with me or I’ll give you a taste of this whip!” the deck foreman threatened waving a nasty looking whip in his right hand.

“And that will be the last thing you ever try to do before I feed your worthless carcass to the sharks!” Ahmed shouted as he bounded across the deck and stood between Jesus and the deck foreman. Ahmed held a wicked long curved blade in his left hand to match the scowl on his face.

The deck foreman was a big man and very strong, but he had seen Ahmed in fights before and suddenly realized that his own life was

hanging by a thin thread. He could see that Ahmed's warning was no joke.

"Oh, I was just joking, Ahmed. I was just trying to have some fun with the kid. Don't be so serious." Then the deck foreman turned to a couple of sailors nearby and yelled, "Since you could not catch any fish you can do his job. Clean this deck before I get back." Then he stormed away toward his cabin.

Ahmed took Jesus up to a sitting area behind the great wheel that was used to steer the ship.

"Did I do something wrong?" Jesus asked Ahmed.

"No, Jesus," Ahmed told him, "That man is a liar, a scoundrel, and he likes to bully people around. It made him angry that you showed up the other seaman by catching those large fish. He thinks that it makes him a better man by putting others down, especially someone who has done something good. Best be steering clear of him and do not question him or try to bargain with him. He hates to lose."

Jesus understood what he was told. The subject changed as Ahmed began telling Jesus about ports he had seen around the Mediterranean Sea. He talked about other large seas to the north of the Greece. Then, he rolled his big dark brown eyes as he told of going beyond the Pillars of Hercules, as the sea gate that opened into the great Atlantic Ocean was called, and then sailing to an island in the far north.

## Chapter 24

### **Arriving in Rome**

After just over four months of sailing, the ship circled around and entered the Tiber River and docked at the port of Rome. They had stopped at Fair Havens in Crete and Syracuse in Sicily to deliver some cargo as they took on some more cargo that was bound for Rome. Ahmed took Jesus on a tour of Rome while Joseph of Arimathea went to meet with Roman magistrates. Jesus looked out upon the floor of the Coliseum from the highest row near the top of the seating area. Ahmed told him of the athletic competitions that were held to entertain the crowds.

Now, more and more frequent the entertainment came from actual combat. They were simply contest between soldiers trying to prove who the most skilled warrior was. Jesus was not impressed, as he realized that many good people would lose their lives in horrible slaughter in that arena at some point in the future. The only place he truly enjoyed was the marketplace where people hawked their trades and goods. Finally, they passed by temples built for Roman pagan gods. Jesus shook his head wondering why people allowed themselves to become enslaved to false religious practices that took everything from them and gave nothing-meaningful back.

Returning to the ship, he sat in his room for several hours as thoughts entered his mind of future events that would unfold in this city that was heralded as the greatest city in the western world at that time. Uncle Joe found him in his cabin. After a knock on the door, he entered beaming with joy. Jesus quickly lost his somber look and rose with a smile to greet his uncle.

“Jesus,” Uncle Joe said trying to compose himself to speak and not to laugh, “I have been awarded the title, Nobilis DE curio.”

“Wow, that’s wonderful Uncle, yes, that is simply great,” Jesus responded but then with furrowed brow added, “Just what exactly does that mean?”

“It means that I have the authority of the Roman Senate to direct everyone I come in contact with, even citizens of Rome that are not of the family of the reigning Caesar, to do my bidding. I have served Rome for years now by reporting findings as well as delivering shipments of ore. My father and now I have brought to Rome many shipments of tin, iron and other ores from the Isle of Briton, which has made a huge impression on numerous Roman senators. I have been given a commission with the responsibility of improving the supply of various ores from the Isles of Briton and to find additional sources of tin, copper, and other ore. This is needed to supply Rome’s many foundries which are making weapons for their armies and other goods for its citizenry and to use in trade with other countries outside the Roman Empire.”

“Wow that is exciting. When do we sail?” Jesus said with a look of anticipation.

“Are you sure you want to put out to sea so soon?” Uncle Joe asked somewhat surprised by Jesus’s reply. “There is so much to see and do here in Rome.”

“I have already seen enough of this city,” Jesus replied. “There is something about this city that deeply troubles me. I look forward to seeing new lands across the great ocean.”

“Well, I am sure we will travel far before returning. But, for now there is much I must do in the Isle of Briton,” Joseph of Arimathea said as his mind returned to thoughts, he had begun years before when he first saw the Isle of Briton with his father.

It was nearly three weeks before provisions and plans were completed and they finally prepared to set sail. Jesus noticed that

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there was a new deck foreman in charge and the one who had threatened him was no longer on board. After the ship cleared the harbor, it began to let out more sails and its speed slowly increased. Jesus went up behind the steering wheel and sat down beside Ahmed.

“I see a certain deck foreman is no longer with us,” he said simply as a matter of fact.

“I did not kill him,” Ahmed said defensively.

“I was talking about him not being on board,” Jesus said and then sat up straight and looked at Ahmed. “What are you talking about? Is he dead?”

“Oh, I guess I should tell you or somehow you will find out,” Ahmed began. “Two weeks ago, while in port, I was at a tavern on shore all by myself minding my own business. Suddenly that deck foreman that threatened you along with another man crowded on both sides of me at the bar. I continued to drink my ale trying to ignore them. They ordered ale and when they got their mugs, the other man stood up and then acted as if it was an accident and spilled his mug of ale onto my back. I turned around and then the deck foreman spilled his mug of ale on me as well. I wanted very much to tear them apart after I cut their sorry throats, but I remembered some things you had told me about turning your cheek to those who oppressed you and decided to let it go. I must say they were stunned as I just sat down my mug, smiled, and then walked out of the tavern.

“I will admit that a couple of very bad words came out my mouth as I turned right and began to briskly walk back toward the ship when out of a dark alley some other men grabbed me and pulled me into the alley. Before I could fight my way clear, the deck foreman, and the other man who was with him in the tavern came running into the alley and one of them hit me over the head with a club. While two of them held my arms against the wall, the deck foreman got in my

face. Then he told me that I was not going to interfere with his plans to throw you off the ship just as soon as it gets out to sea. I tried to tell them that was a very bad idea and they just better forget it and be nice to you or they would regret it. Then he said that I was never going back on our ship again when they got through with me.

“For years now, I have often talked with your uncle about the Yahweh of Israel and the teachings of the Holy Scrolls. It was not until I met you and began listening in many times as you have prayed each day to Almighty Yahweh since we sailed from Joppa that I have begun to believe in Yahweh like you and your uncle. Yes, I have learned so much from you and to believe and trust in Yahweh for things we cannot do ourselves. When I walked out of the tavern, I had begun to pray to Yahweh. When I was subdued by those thugs, I told Yahweh that I needed help as your Uncle had entrusted your safekeeping to me. I did not know if I could fight my way free of these men but this was more than just about me.

“The deck foreman was about to attack me with a large club and the other man was going to use a large iron bar to beat me. In my mind I continued to cry out to Almighty Yahweh to deliver me so I could look after you. While two men held me, the others came at me intent on killing me. Before they could further strike me, two very large men appeared behind my attackers. They grabbed the two men who were about to strike me. They threw them like sacks of garbage all the way to the end of the alley into a brick wall and upon impact; they slid down the wall and collapsed into a heap on top of the trash that lay there. Then they grabbed the two men who held me, they raised them up above their heads, and then threw them as well to hit the brick wall and they landed on top of the other two. Then the two men smiled at me and one said, “Your prayer has been answered. We are angels sent from Almighty Yahweh. Our primary mission is to guard Jesus. But we just wanted to thank you for intervening on His behalf while on the ship the other day by this little act of kindness



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in your behalf. Keep up the good work.” With that, both disappeared. I do not know if any of those guys were killed or not, but the deck foreman did not return to the ship. Honest, I did not lay a hand on any of them.”

“Yahweh works in mysterious ways,” Jesus said as he smiled, “with you around, my guardian angels will have an easier time. I do not remember properly thanking you after that altercation on the ship. Thank you, Ahmed; you are a great and true friend.” Jesus put his hand on top of Ahmed’s large arm as they sat there.

“Think nothing of it,” Ahmed said while thinking, he called me his friend. Then he said, “It is I that should thank you for teaching me things I did not know about the true and great Yahweh and His way. That is more precious than everything I have ever learned before.”

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## Chapter 25

### A Stop in Carthage

Their first stop after leaving Rome was at the port in Carthage on the northern coast of Africa. It ended up as an extended stay rather than a short one to deliver and put up new cargo. The ship remained in port for nearly a month while repairs that were needed to fix the rudder turned out to be a complete overhaul rather than mending. Jesus accompanied by Ahmed toured the city and Jesus spent days talking with older people about Carthage's proud history. Jesus enjoyed this city much more than Rome. Those they talked to claimed that at one time Carthage was the greatest city-state in the world with ships and armies that reached out to many distant shores even beyond the Mediterranean, to Western Europe, and around Africa to expand its empire. Jesus spent many days sitting and listening to the history of Carthage.

**Carthage owed its beginning back to a period of time between 800 and 900 B.C. when the ten northern tribes called Israel had a king named Ahab. The prophet Elijah had called upon Yahweh to stop rain from falling throughout all of Israel. During this drought, a large exodus of Israelites sailed with people from the city-states of Tyre and Sidon along the northern coast of Africa and founded a Hebrew colony initially called Kirjath-Hadeschath, which the Romans later called Carthage. Its growth was greatly impacted when Assyria began its invasion of the territory held by the ten northern tribes of Israel. Those not taken in captivity had to flee. Some fled to Judah but many others fled to Carthage swelling its population dramatically.**

By 650 B.C., the city-state of Carthage had matured and was quickly becoming the dominant power in the western portion of the Mediterranean Sea. They were building a naval power with the goal of blocking passage through the Pillars of Hercules (much later called the Strait of Gibraltar). It was the power of Carthage that limited Greece to the eastern portion of the Mediterranean Sea. Their conflicts allowed a new power, Rome, to eventually rise. Initially, Carthage dictated terms to treaties with the weaker Romans, which caused the Romans to bide their time until they would be prepared to settle accounts.

By 350 B.C., there was no doubt that Carthage was the predominant power in the western portion of the Mediterranean as they controlled the Pillars of Hercules with its powerful navy. No ship by any other nation was allowed to sail into the great Ocean beyond the Mediterranean Sea without its approval and after paying a stiff tax. Its maritime fleet had enormous ships that could carry over 500 passengers or well above 1000 tons of cargo. It grew rapidly as it renewed trade with settlements in the western hemisphere that would later be called Central and North America. It transported thousands of its citizens to the western continents to exploit the riches of its resources. They returned to areas that had been developed during the pinnacle of the reigns of King David and King Solomon of Israel. This trade had collapsed after the ten northern tribes of Israel rebelled and formed its own nation leaving basically two tribes in the south to become the nation of Judah. Explorers and adventurers from Carthage had been instrumental in developing tin and copper mining in the Isle of Briton and even North America that Rome was now

eager to exploit at the time Jesus traveled with his Uncle Joseph of Arimathea.

In 300 B.C., the Greek mariner Pytheas, as an exception, was allowed to sail into the Atlantic Ocean by the Carthaginians out of respect for Alexander the Great's Macedonians. Pytheas journeyed to various points along the coastlands of western and northern Europe. Except for that passage, no other Greek ships were allowed to pass the Pillars of Hercules for another two centuries. Carthage knew vastly more than Greece or Rome about the spherical earth and the geography of the earth. They had discovered and begun to explore the New World and even had colonized and begun to exploit its resources long before Greece or Rome ever laid eyes on any territory beyond the Pillars of Hercules.

Greek historians and scholars such as Aristotle noted that the Carthaginians sailed many days across the western ocean (as the Atlantic Ocean was called at that time) to a very great island that had navigable rivers, fertile soil, forests, and a pleasant climate. This great island was actually not an island. It was none other than a continent that many centuries later would be known as North America.

In modern times, Carthaginian coins, artifacts, and inscriptions would be found as far south as Alabama, as far north as Connecticut and New York, and westward in Kansas, Oklahoma, Colorado, and Nevada. Dr. Barry Fell wrote two books *Saga America* and *America B.C.* that

documents these findings. Dr. Fell also proposed that Carthage got much of its gold and timber for its vast naval ships from ancient North, Central, and South America.

This was why Carthage blockaded the Pillars of Hercules, as they did not want other nations from gaining access to the wealth of the 'New World'. This 'secret' made them the wealthiest and strongest nation of their time. Sad to say, modern historians have chosen to ignore extensive facts of these events. They do not want to acknowledge any proof that proves Columbus was not the first to discover America. They fear such knowledge supports the truths of the Bible and existence of Yahweh. Such actions join with those of evolutionists that ignore absolute proof of a creator Yahweh.

The land surrounding the city proper of Carthage was incredibly fertile and produced millions of bushels of wheat each year. At its zenith, its agriculture and trade made it by far the richest city in the world. It used this wealth to fund armies to conquer more land for its overflowing population. The famous Carthaginian general, Hannibal led a march over the Alps and invaded the homeland of Rome. For 12 years, he destroyed all Roman armies sent against him as his forces pillaged Italy. In 216 B.C., his forces killed over 70,000 Roman soldiers in a single battle at Cannae.

However, Hannibal's failure to attack the city of Rome allowed their armies to regroup and fortify ranks and eventually launch a counterattack that finally was able to defeat Hannibal and his army.

**This was the first step in Carthage's decline. Rome slowly rose in strength and resolve and in 146 B.C. completed an invasion of the city of Carthage taking tons of gold and over 50,000 captives. After Roman armies had begun to land on the North African coast, Carthage's population began to flee. Some went back to areas in the middle east, others went north into Europe and the Isle of Briton, and many sailed to the western hemisphere across the great ocean never to return.**<sup>40</sup>

Jesus smiled at the way these people wanted to think of themselves as ones who had pioneered the ocean voyages around the world. They did not like to be reminded that the nation of Israel hundreds of years before their founding under King David and later King Solomon joined forces with the city-states of the Phoenicians. Together, their ships journeyed far and wide in search for resources to build cities, palaces, and eventually a great Temple for Israel's Yahweh. Ships had traveled around the southern tip of Africa all the way to a land that would eventually be called India.

Others charted the western coast of Europe and northward to what is now known as the Scandinavian countries where fierce warriors lived who wore the skins of animals and metal helmets with horns. Their tribes were called Vikings and they lived to fight and pillage. They took ships to lands across the great ocean to establish a few colonies but as they found few villages to plunder, they lost interest. They did not realize the wealth of the lands they found in the West. However, the ships of Rome that went across the great ocean found a great continent that abounded in all manner of natural resources. Ships continued down the eastern coast of this western continent in

the north past a narrowed section of land that connected it to another great western continent to the south in modern times called South America.



Part Seven:  
The Christ, Journeys to Briton  
and the West

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## Chapter 26

### **Sailing to the Isle of Briton**

As Joseph of Arimathea's ship was finally able to continue their voyage, they began to sail toward the far eastern portion of the Mediterranean Sea. As they neared the sea gate, Jesus looked at the coastlines on both sides of ship's railing. He often looked over at his uncle who occasionally enjoyed steering the great ship. Before him, he could see the point of land on the port side and the face of a large mountain on the starboard side. They were approaching the Pillars of Hercules that would be called the Strait of Gibraltar many centuries later. After having sailed on the sea for some time and actually losing sight of land in any direction, it now seemed like the gap was simply too narrow for a ship as large as theirs to pass through. Once they drew closer to its opening, Jesus relaxed as he could then see it was indeed large enough for quite a few ships to pass easily side by side. As they entered the Atlantic Ocean, he leaned out with his hand over his eyes looking to the west.

"You will not see anything out there," Uncle Joe told him.

"I know. But, look at how the waters curve down toward both sides of the horizon," Jesus remarked. "How silly it is that some sailors fear that if we continued to the West, we would fall off the edge of the world. The fact is plain. It is as if we are on a great big round ball. That means that if we kept going straight in any direction, we would eventually return to the same place we are presently at."

"That would not be possible as there are a lot of obstacles that would get in our way," Uncle Joe said.

"You mean like islands?"

“Yes, very large islands, or more properly called continents. And then there is the ice to the north.”

“Ice? Where could there be ice in this water large enough not to quickly melt?” Even as he said these words, his mind recalled a deep memory from eons before his birth where he saw the earth being formed and large areas far to the north and to the south of the planet was covered with ice.

“North of where we are going,” Uncle Joe said. “Beyond the Isles of Briton if we keep going north, we would begin to run into chunks of ice the size of mountains floating all about. If we were not careful and rammed into a large one, it could damage and even sink our ship.”

“You mean it could really sink a ship as large as this one?” Jesus asked as his mind returned to the present.

“Oh yes, and one many times larger than this ship,” Uncle Joe affirmed.

“I would like to see such ice. But, not try to ram into one,” Jesus’ mind began to visualize these floating mountains of ice. Then in his mind, he prophetically saw an incredibly large ship made of a very hard and strong material that would be called steel. It had smoke coming from three of the four large stacks on top of the ship. His mind saw the ship charging toward a lone mountain of ice whose top sticking out of the water did not reveal that below the waterline its bulk was many times greater than this massive ship itself. He opened his eyes quickly as he did not wish to see what he knew would happen to the ship. “On the other hand, I do not think I want to see it at all.”

The ship slowly rounded the large Iberian Peninsula. Jesus could feel the temperature each day becoming just a little cooler as the ship continued its voyage ever northward. The coast was always kept in

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sight on the starboard side. Jesus noticed several of the sailors would begin to get anxious and look fearfully westward whenever the coastline became faint due to an early morning fog. He tried not to laugh aloud as he overheard several sailors whispering of having heard tales that beyond the horizon to the west the sea suddenly dropped into nothingness, the end of the world they called it. They all cringed as one sailor chimed in and told of a sailor who was on a ship sailing to the west when they heard something like a great waterfall and they turned back before they fell over the edge. Jesus could not resist smiling at their foolishness. Then he frowned and shook his head as he realized many people would rather believe such ignorant tales than seek the truth.

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## Chapter 27

### **The Isles of Briton**

The ship's lookout shouted "Land Ho!" and those on deck soon caught sight of the large island called Briton. As they neared land, the ship turned to the west and began following the coast northward until it swung around due east. Soon, they could see land to the north as well as to the south. The land began to close rapidly as they neared the port that was built near the site of the city that would later be called Bristol, England. Joseph had been there many times before and had established a large warehouse with offices for his shipping company next to the long dock that could birth half a dozen large ocean-going ships. This port was important to all shipping ventures from this point north and west as it was one of the warmest places in all of Briton as well as being protected from stormy weather that troubled ships along most of the coastline surrounding the island. The ship docked and after attending to business, Joseph and Jesus climbed aboard a carriage that would take them to Joseph's home outside of Glastonbury.

"I will introduce you to King Arviragus who rules this portion of Briton," Joseph told Jesus as they left the docks.

"This island has its own king?" Jesus responded.

"Well, yes it does. In fact, there are several kings that somewhat independently rule large portions of this island from South, West, and North. Even though an island, it is quite large and has always been quite independent of the continent to the east that includes the large peninsula where Rome is located to the south protruding into the Mediterranean Sea. Rome has used rulers of local areas to represent them to the population rather than trying to install a foreigner. Like they did with King Herod in Judea," Joseph

remarked. “King Arviragus and I have developed a close friendship. He was the one who gave me twelve parcels of land for developing considerable wealth within his kingdom. I built a house on my land near Glastonbury.”

Jesus was filled with wonder as he absorbed the countryside along the roadway. In the pastureland, the grass was nearly overpoweringly green and lush and made the Judean countryside he remembered seem like a desert. He marveled at the tall trees and the great number and variety of them that grew on the hillsides. He noted that the cottages were quaint and plowed fields were covered with winter crops to build the soil. Joseph’s home was a medium size castle with servant quarters to one end next to a kitchen area. There were twelve bedrooms on the second and third levels as well as numerous sitting rooms scattered about and a large dining room next to the kitchen on the first floor. **41**

“Are you a king, Uncle?” Jesus asked as he was shown to his bedroom.

“I am not royalty in any nation. However, I have been very blessed in all my undertakings,” Uncle Joe answered. “I am compelled to also acknowledge my father’s hand in starting the shipping line and making important connections. He has retired from all activities and enjoys our home in Arimathea where he can now spoil my brothers and sister’s children.”

“Why are you not married?” Jesus asked.

“I am married,” he responded. He saw Jesus’ eyes go wide in surprise, so he quickly added, “I am married to the sea. For most men it is Yahweh’s way for them to marry a good woman, settle down, and raise children. Alas, for me, my heart was captured by



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the allure of lands beyond every horizon calling, beckoning me to seek out their wondrous mysteries. I have seen sights that most men have hardly dared to dream about. I would not want any woman to love me and seek to be my wife and remain alone wondering if I will return after sailing away. Nor would I want to fall in love with any woman and have to choose between her and the sea.”

Jesus saw in his uncle’s face a man that was satisfied with his choices in life. No sadness, no regret, just a bright sparkle in his eyes and a grin that revealed his joy in living life to its fullest. He found in him a role that he would also follow as his destiny would not allow him to develop a relationship with a woman or to marry one and have a family.

“Even though I am very young, I cannot help but feel the same fate awaits me. I will never marry a woman for I too am already married. Married to a mission in life that I must complete at the right time,” Jesus told Uncle Joe as he contemplated his fate.

Uncle Joe did not respond for in his heart he already knew that Jesus’ life would not follow that of most men born in Judea. He felt he had a calling to care for Jesus in these crucial years until he became a man. Joseph went to his room to dress for dinner. He sat down to remove his traveling boots. Suddenly, he shuddered as a voice prophetically whispered in his mind, “*You will also care for his dead body after he is offered as a sacrifice for the sins of all mankind.*” He lost his breath as he gasped. He strived to regain air in his lungs as his mind silently cried out, “Oh merciful Yahweh, be his strength and my own to prepare us both for that day. Never the less, Your will be done.” It took nearly half an hour for him to

compose himself and be able to rejoin others who were already there to dine with him and meet his nephew, Jesus.

At the dinner table, Jesus met several other men and women. They spoke in a language he at first did not understand. He could tell by their mannerism and laughter that they were very happy to see that his uncle had returned to his home there. Initially, his uncle would explain what they were talking about to which he also laughed good-naturedly. The main course was venison that had been roasting all day in a great hearth in the kitchen that was much larger than the fireplaces to the side of the great dining room as well as the various sitting rooms throughout the castle. Its aroma had filled all three stories of the castle. As it reached Jesus' bedroom on the second level, it had wetted his appetite in anticipation to feasting on it at dinnertime. Before the dinner was over, Jesus did not have to have Uncle Joe interpret for him. He was speaking the language as if he had been born there. Only his uncle knew he had never been taught the language but had acquired it supernaturally as a gift from The Holy Spirit.

During the following months, Jesus wandered about the land surrounding the castle when his uncle had to attend to business at the dock. He then went with his uncle on a journey across landscapes that he enjoyed seeing that took them several days to visit several mining sites. Most were mining for tin and a few mined for copper. As Nobilis DE curio, Joseph's authority, and responsibility had increased to include the oversight of mining beyond that of simply providing the transportation of ore to Rome. He was also required to search out new locations and further develop mining operations in Briton and in new lands beyond the great ocean. This meant he had to find and prepare men to supervise in his absence at every location.

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Joseph of Arimathea was gifted in being able to see through the outer appearance of men and accurately gauge their ability and integrity. Because he also sincerely respected and paid well those who worked for him, he was well received wherever he went.

Jesus picked up the local languages with remarkable speed. It seemed like every new city they went through had its own dialect and manner of speaking. Soon, he was talking with people in every village as if he were native born in their specific habitat in Briton. When Joseph took Jesus to meet King Arviragus, he was impressed at how easy Jesus was able to gain favor with the king. Indeed, when he introduced Jesus to King Arviragus everything about it was like presenting one of great majesty to another. It was as if Jesus was naturally born and raised to nobility. Joseph laughed at himself for such a thought. Then in his mind he recognized again, ‘Of course, Jesus was born to actually be a king. In fact, a king above all kings of earth’s dominions.’ 42

Years quickly passed and it was now the early beginnings of the fourth Spring Jesus saw while in Briton. He enjoyed this time of year as he saw flowers blooming everywhere and there were blossoms on many trees. In the fall he would be sixteen and in the years that had passed, Jesus had grown almost to full stature. His muscles were strong and he easily worked alongside with others at various tasks. He had worked in the fields planting and harvesting various crops. He had worked at several mines. He had worked at the warehouse and on the dock loading and unloading cargo ships. At each job, after a brief learning period, he soon began to keep pace with seasoned experienced workers and gained their respect. He only had to be told or shown what to do one time and then he did the work like men who had done so all their adult life.

He had written and received letters from his mother about every six months. At the end of his mother's letter, his father, Joseph would add a few lines telling about the family's construction work. It was booming. His brothers were continually increasing their ability to help not only with their labor but also in running the business.

One day, Jesus was helping one of the servants pulling weeds from a flowerbed when his uncle arrived home.

"Jesus, how soon can you pack your bags?" Uncle Joe quickly asked him without a pause of expressing a greeting first. Clearly his mind was on something important.

"Do I pack for a temporary journey or to leave here permanently?" Jesus responded.

"We are going on a trip across the ocean," Uncle Joe answered. "If our ship goes down in a storm, permanent. However, I think we will be able to return in a couple of years, maybe three."

"In that case," Jesus said. "I can be ready in one to two hours."

"That will be fine," Uncle Joe said, "in fact, now that I think about it, take your time as it will take me a bit longer."

Joseph's servants did most of his packing, as this was a normal task for them. He had instructed them to pack additional heavy coats and boots for both him and the young man in his charge. They climbed into a carriage after the trunks were loaded. Jesus could see a deep affection the servants had for his uncle as he said his goodbyes. He had already completed arrangements for the mining and shipment of ore to Rome in his absence until his return. It was not uncommon for him to be absent for years at a time. The men he

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left in charge had the authority to act in his behalf and had done so honorably for his father and then for him for over thirty years and had been well rewarded for their integrity and diligence.

“Well, it is time that you might get to see the great floating ice fields as we cross the North Atlantic,” Uncle Joe told Jesus.

“I certainly hope our ship will be able to steer clear of them,” Jesus said. He would miss the beautiful landscape of Briton but the excitement of seeing new lands drew him on in anticipation.

“I was about your age when I realized that I was totally smitten. So, you better watch out,” Uncle Joe said as he saw the excitement in Jesus’ eyes. “Or the Sea just might steal your heart.”

“Don’t worry, Uncle. Your bride is safe from me,” Jesus said with a smile. Again, in his heart, he felt that his life would be like that of his uncle. His was to be one of a purpose that would not allow for a normal life of marrying and raising a family. This thought did not sadden him. It made him feel somewhat impatient, if anything, to simply grow up and quickly add the years to make him a man at thirty years of age. Then after reflection, he knew it was also important to learn all the lessons of life that a human being gained before it was time for... death.

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## Chapter 28

### **First Journey to the Great Western Continent**

The ship put out to sea just as the sun cleared the mist of morning. It was early spring as they made their way up the western coast of Briton northward. Just as they reached the northern tip, their course steered to the northwest. The temperature began to fall rapidly as they continued this direction. Some of the sailors began to grumble, but the captain of the ship made it plain to all the crew he would not tolerate insubordination. All were relieved when the lookout announced he had sighted land. They pulled into a small port on the southwestern side of a large island called Iceland. Jesus thought its name sure fit as there was a considerable amount of snow and ice piled high on nearby mountains. The terrain was rocky and, in the distance, he could see clouds of smoke. He was told that this came from volcanic activity that was common across the island and which indirectly kept its port and much of its land from being covered with a blanket of snow and ice tens of feet deep. Jesus always enjoyed hearing others especially those who lived in various areas explain what they understood was of particular interest even though he knew he could lecture them all as his memories grew sharper with each passing year of his earthly life about things that happened in his heavenly life that was an eternity in the past.

After taking on supplies, the ship departed and sailed almost due west. The lookout began regularly calling attention to icebergs to the captain, who had the ship change its course to keep away from them. Then suddenly without warning, an unfavorable wind came up and began to drive the ship to starboard directly toward a large iceberg in spite of its rudder being turned to steer away from the iceberg. Jesus stood by the railing as the massive mountain of ice

drew closer. He watched as the captain took over the large steering wheel while commanding the sailors to change the sails and drop all sea anchors. Then waves started to increase in size between the ship and the iceberg while the distance between them closed. Their speed increased regardless of what they attempted ever pushing the ship directly toward iceberg. Hopelessly, the captain shouted for the crew to brace for impact.

Jesus closed his eyes and called out softly to his Father in heaven, “Father, please help us.” Then he opened his eyes and he began to call to the elements, “Water, be still. Wind, drive the ship to the west. Remove from hence, mass of ice,” he commanded.

None of the sailors aboard the ship heard his voice except his uncle who stood near his side. Instantly, the wind changed direction as the waves dropped and the sea calmed. The ship came about to port and the huge iceberg stopped and changed its direction of travel.

From their places about the deck crouched in terror, the captain and the crew slowly rose up to gaze about finally realizing that they were not going to die in the frozen waters. Astonished they could hardly find any other words except, “What just happened?” They stood and looked out toward the iceberg now drifting away from the ship. Then they all began to whoop and laugh and cry realizing that they would live to see another day. It took a while for the captain to get them back to work for he let the sailors enjoy their celebration while he continued to wonder, ‘what in the world happened?’

Jesus returned to his cabin. For some reason he felt very tired as if he had just completed some very strenuous labor. He lay down on



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his bunk. He knew he had stopped what would have been the destruction of the ship. He knew that the power of The Holy Spirit caused the miracle. But what was a shocking revelation to himself was that this power had come from within himself. A knock on his door brought him back to the present. He responded, "Come in."

Uncle Joe came in the door and just stood there looking at him. Then he said, "Thank you for saving us."

"Elohim saved us," Jesus replied.

"That's what I said. You saved us," he responded.

Joseph of Arimathea knew it but could not help from being amazed he was in the presence of Elohim incarnate in his nephew, Jesus. He knew of the miraculous birth, but that had been mere words as he had witnessed the power that was at his young nephew's bidding. He could not stop a shudder that normally came from the cold but now came from realizing the awe of having as his ward the offspring of Almighty Yahweh, who was both human and divine. Joseph saw that Jesus was experiencing the same feelings, emotions, pains, and desires as every other young man. Yet, he was growing in awareness of his divinity and power, as well as the reason he had been born. It was an immense undertaking that no mortal had ever faced.

Joseph was well versed in the Hebrew Bible. He understood many of the prophecies that most rabbis overlooked. The Christ would have two missions to complete. One would be faced while he was a mortal. The other would be faced when he returned as an immortal. How was Jesus able to concentrate on things happening in the here and now with such a destiny ever drawing closer as he aged, he often wondered? It is one thing to know something as an abstract idea, but another to fully comprehend it as a fact.

Joseph of Arimathea felt that in time Jesus would share what he could about his mission in this life with others perhaps even himself. He expected that in the days ahead that he would see more miracles performed by his nephew, Jesus, the Christ. The Christ his people had prayed and looked for since returning from the captivity of Babylon hundreds of years ago. Now, he realized how important it was for Jesus to be away from his homeland. If he were to begin to perform miracles and to argue with the errors of the Pharisees and Priests now, he probably would not live to see his twenty-first birthday. Yes, he needed to be a man when he began his final mission in this life.

## Chapter 29

### **Beginning the Searches for Mines in the Western Continent**

After a brief stop at a port on the coast of Greenland, the ship continued to its next stop at a small port that would later be called St. John's, Newfoundland. The ship remained at the dock for over a month as Joseph sought people who knew of routes by land and by sea to certain geographical areas in the great western continent. The ship finally put out to sea and ventured to the north around a large land mass and then up a great river that would later be named the St. Lawrence River. He met with people along the way who told him of several great inland seas nestled together that could be reached by a short journey over land from the river. There were large falls and treacherous rapids between this river and the large lakes. They would need to find a harbor before reaching the rapids.

Hundreds of years before ships regularly plied these waterways taking ore and hardwood beams to Palestine for Kings David and Solomon of Israel to build great palaces for their royal court and a Great Temple to Israel's Elohim Yahweh. Tales of these events had been passed down from generation to generation. Besides the native Indian tribes, they met along their journeys there were many who were actually descendants of mixed marriages of Israelites and the native people who had worked the mines and lumber mills or helped transport the ore or lumber across land to ports for shipment.

They found several dilapidated ports along the river. These had decayed from lack of maintenance and use for hundreds of years. They dropped anchored near one that was in cove where they could

transport crews to and from shore while they rebuilt the dock. Work was divided between three crews. One would build several buildings for crewmembers to live in and for storage. Another would make the dock large enough to pull the ship against it to make loading and offloading much easier. The last crew would develop relations with local people to provide food for the men that remained at the new port.

Then Joseph with Jesus as well as Ahmed who was always at his side took the rest of the men which included mining experts on an expedition led by natives seeking out the remains of mines from ages long past. They would evaluate the soil and the terrain to determine if tin or copper could be mined as well as how to efficiently transport it to the coast for shipment to Rome. They traveled light and fast but still their journey over land saw the months pass slowly by. After three weeks of travel, they found the first deserted mines that had not been worked for hundreds of years. A quick examination revealed they still had considerable ore just waiting for someone to claim it and start working them again. They heard of other mines that strung out circling the great lakes to the west.

When summer had passed, they had to head back in order to reach the ship before fall was over. Members of the crew had mapped their journey westward so the return trip went much faster. They left twenty men well provisioned at the port and the rest boarded the ship. The first snowfall of the season bid them farewell as they set out going back down the St. Lawrence River and circled back around to the Atlantic coast and began making their way southward down the eastern coast. They feared that winter was coming early in this strange new world so they needed to find a good place to settle in before the winter was in full force. Finally, they found a harbor near

the site where the port and city of Charlestown, South Carolina would be established over one and a half millennium later.

The winter months had begun as local people they had met upon anchoring had told them about. There would probably be no snow or ice but rather cold and rainy weather but not anything near as bad as to the north. They began again as they had done on the St. Lawrence River port to build living quarters, a sturdy dock, and develop relations with local people to provide food. They had provisions to last beyond the winter months but they did not want their supply of food to drop below a three-month level. They were quite happy to trade with locals and were particularly excited to learn of the presence of plentiful game nearby.

The local people in this area were native Indian tribes and there were a few who traced their ancestry to marriages between Indians and people who had come from Carthage, Phoenicia, and Israel hundreds of years before. That first winter was an unusually mild one. Joseph left trusted men to attend to the development of the port, while he and Ahmed along with Jesus and two dozen other men went on what was to be a venture that was to last no longer than three months. One of the men had been on the journey near the great lakes and who had drawn the maps. He would draw a crude map of what they found on this expedition. **43**

They ventured due west slightly looping to the south of a mountain range that would many centuries later be called the Appalachian Mountain range that ran south from Newfoundland into what would eventually be called the state of Alabama over eighteen hundred years later. This mountain range is broken by gaps and sections of it eventually had different names along its 1500 miles near the eastern side of the continent that ran a few hundred miles somewhat parallel to the eastern coast.

They found a vast landscape that varied from swamps to red clay hills to forests and then dark fertile soil in flatlands. Most of it was covered with what seemed an innumerable variety of trees, plants, shrubs, and grass. The game was plentiful and fish teemed in the many rivers they crossed. They met numerous native Indian tribes whose scouts watched them from a distance. Then something amazing took place. One night after they had pitched camp and were sitting around a large fire Jesus suddenly stood up and looked out into the dark dense forest. Then he spoke in a loud voice in a language none of the men understood. He raised his right arm with open palm in a universally understood sign of peace. The men jumped up and grabbed their weapons when they heard the same language call out from the forest. Jesus told the men to lower their weapons as these Indians came in peace. After Jesus called out again in the strange language, Indians began to come out of their hiding places.

“These men are of the Cherokee nation,” Jesus told them. Then the leader of this group of Cherokees began speaking to Jesus and he translated what was said. The Indians had been on a hunting trip and heard from other tribes that a party of white men was journeying on a path that would cross theirs. They had heard that a young white man was among them that was very unusual. This young man had spoken the language of many different tribes as they had journeyed to this point. What was remarkable was that he spoke in a manner that showed he understood many things about the native languages that no other white man had ever done.

“How do you know their language?” one of the crew asked Jesus. Joseph and Ahmed looked at each other and smiled a knowing smile.

“At first I heard the words in my mind and that was what I spoke,” Jesus tried to explain. “Then when they called back, their words just opened my mind to understand what they said. All the languages I have heard since my journeys with my uncle began seem to make

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sense to me as if they were the language I had learned from my birth.”

Some braves, as young Indians were called, carried a deer into the firelight, and began to dress it out. Joseph’s men quickly built an apparatus to roast the deer over the fire. As the smell of roasted meat filled the camp, the men and natives sat around the fire. Those who were not close by Jesus used their hands and did a simple ‘sign language’ to communicate with each other. Those by Jesus marveled at the way he communicated with the Indians. To help things along when it seemed like there was an impasse in communicating a crewman or Indian called to Jesus and he clarified what each was trying to say.

“When Jesus first dined with me at the castle of King Arviragus before the meal was over, he was talking as one born in Isles of Briton,” Joseph said to Ahmed as they watched Jesus as he talked with the men and the Cherokees around him with equal ease.

“Such was so as I have been with him while you were taking care of business on our travels,” Ahmed agreed. “I have never known of one who has such a gift of speaking in all languages. You should have seen him in Carthage and Rome. He really seemed to be more native to the various cities than those who had live their entire life there. Wherever we have been, he walks about as one who knows what is around the next corner or down the street beyond sight. The hand of Yahweh is mightily upon the young man.”

“More than the hand of Yahweh,” Joseph acknowledged. “He is one with Elohim and the great Holy Spirit makes them as one.” To which Ahmed nodded in agreement.

“It is I who am being cared for and protected by the young man rather than the reverse,” Ahmed said. “You need not fear for the young man’s life is safe before our Yahweh above.”

At least for now, Joseph thought, until it is time. He forced himself to stop thinking about what he knew would happen to his nephew in the fullness of time for him to fulfil his destiny.

That feast was often mentioned by the crew as the best time they had since leaving Briton as they continued their westward journey. Finally, they reached a very wide river and decided not to try crossing it. They felled enough trees to build a large stockade on a high bluff near what would eventually become the city of Vicksburg, Mississippi after the founding of the great North American Republic. It was built very sturdy for they felt they would return to this spot in the near future.

Their journey back to port circled a few hundred miles north of their western path. The land was like what many had speculated the Garden of Eden must have looked like. Rolling hills covered by verdant forests, plush valleys of grass with sparkling rivers and streams that seemed never-ending. They learned from other Indian tribes on this leg of their journey of a gap in the Appalachian Mountain range that they used cross back into the eastern coastal section of North America. Uncle Joe had begun to grow anxious to return to the port. He wanted to get started with the expedition northward towards the great lakes and the mines purported to have existed there. This southern approach was vital to allow for shipments during winter months in which northern routes would be blocked by snow and ice. They soon began to recognize landmarks that guided their return to the port they were wintering at.

One cold evening Jesus talked with his uncle in their cabin in front of a blazing fire in the fireplace.

“For several years I have heard the cry of many people in my mind. They are people from tribes of Israel that left the Promise



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Land and came to this land beyond the great western ocean hundreds of years ago. They continually petitioned Yahweh to send the Christ. Uncle, I must go to them to affirm the truths of Yahweh and His way of life that He taught Israel during the time of Moses,” Jesus announced.

“But, most of these people do not even know of their ancestry or the heritage of Yahweh’s people and the teachings of the Holy Scrolls,” Uncle Joe responded.

“You would be surprised at the number of people who know they came from the various ten northern tribes of Israel,” Jesus replied. “I must try to reach as many as I can and give them an answer to their prayers that the Almighty has heard and still cares for them.”

“Just tell me what you need to do and I will provide everything I can to help you do what only you can do,” answered Uncle Joseph of Arimathea.

Spring was in full bloom when Joseph, Jesus, Ahmed, and more than half the remaining crew set out on a northern journey from the coast to reach the mines near what would be called the Great Lakes. As in the previous expeditions, they met many different types of people from various native Indian tribes. There were some individuals with similarities in appearance to themselves. These were friendly and came out of the forest to greet them and take them back to their villages. The villages were like towns somewhat different from those they had seen throughout their travels in the lower lands of the continent. Unlike the teepees made of poles covered with animal hides, these homes were made of small trees and branches in a square rather than circular shape. In the center of the village there was a large building made of beams of large trees and was used for tribal gatherings. As they went ever northward, the villages grew larger and the homes and other buildings were more

substantial to survive the frigid winters. There were fields that had been cleared of trees and were used to grow gardens of vegetables. They also had areas fenced in to raise livestock.

When they reached the Great Lakes, they discovered several cities with people who not only had similar features to themselves but they had folk tales of having mingled with strangers who had come to search for metals deep in the earth. The men of several tribes told them that their forefathers had worked with the strangers to dig tunnels into mountains. They had passed down the knowledge and skill to make wheeled carts that traveled on rails to pull ore out of the mines. The strangers who remained at the mine sites had taken wives of the native women and set up homes.

These strangers had told them that they had come on this quest on behalf of a great king to the east. That was hundreds of years ago and after the strangers from the east had stopped coming, then others came from a place called Carthage and they worked to supply the ore for them. Then there came a time when no more ships came for the ore. The work stopped and the mines were closed as some began to collapse in disrepair.

They spent their first ‘real’ winter since arriving at the western continent with these people. The previous winter they had spent in the south had been mild and it only rained. When winter came here in the north there was snowfall that accumulated to several feet deep. Thankfully, the Indian tribes had warm fur coats the visitors were able to buy from them. Everyone of Joseph’s expeditionary group had never seen such snow since stopping off at Iceland and Greenland. Lakes, streams, and even rivers froze and they were able to walk on the ice. The natives taught them to open holes on the frozen lake and to fish in these holes. It was to them a strange setting

but when they began catching fish, they lost all their worries about the ice giving way causing them to drown or freeze to death.

They discovered that these people did not just stay indoors tolerating the freezing temperatures and deep snow. They dressed in several layers of fur and skins of animals and climbed up hills that looked like mountains. Then they used what they called 'sleds' to slide down the slopes. Several including children would climb onto a sled and one would get the sled started and jump onto the back as it started on its journey sliding down the mountain on a bed of snow. Most of the men from Joseph's group tried this new activity. Their exclamations of joy and excitement rang out as they zoomed down the paths made by other sleds. Joseph and Jesus joined in the adventure but they could not get Ahmed to try it. He kept saying he would be needed to doctor Joseph or Jesus if they crashed into a tree. Surprisingly, only a couple men of the crew got minor injuries. Then a couple of young Indians got hurt crashing into a tree at full speed as they tried to establish a new path by going down a hill covered with three feet of snow. Jesus was the first to reach them. When the others got there, they found the young Indians with only a few scratches on their arms and face and big smiles on their faces.

As the others continued their sledding, Uncle Joe asked Jesus what had really happened. He told him that one of the young men had a broken leg and the other a broken collarbone. He had healed them both and told them not to tell anyone what he had done. Joseph realized that Jesus would not have been able to perform such miracles back in Judea. He knew that Jesus' compassion for others could be expressed freely here in this vast wilderness that was virtually unknown to the Jews of their homeland. In time that would change.

When springtime came, they ventured even further around the great lakes and found other tribes with similar tales during the

following year. As the second summer came and went, their expedition about the great lakes that spread out like oceans were rewarded as they found evidence of a much greater sources of copper, tin, and iron than were available in the entire Isle of Briton. The leaves had already changed to incredibly shades of yellow, red, orange, and finally brown and many had already fallen covering the ground.

They spent a final winter in the northern land and began planning for their return trip that included a debate as far as the route they should take back to the port on the southeastern coast. Joseph had been told of a great river that flowed southward all the way to a great body of salt water. Jesus speculated that it might be the great river they had seen during their expedition the first winter they had spent in the western continent. They sent out scouts with natives who showed them the way to the beginnings of the river. It was decided that they would divide into two groups. One would take the land route back to the southeastern coast that they used coming up to the Great Lakes. The other group would take the river route. Later they would decide which route was better. The route to the port on the St. Lawrence River would also be considered but this northern route would not be usable during winters.

When spring came, they began two projects. One was to build small wagons to carry samples taken from the various mines that they could pull and push on their journey to the southeastern coast port. Unlike on the continent and back in Judea and Galilee they had no trained oxen to pull the wagons and carts. So, the men had to provide the muscle in place of oxen. The second project was to build several barges to transport ore, hoping the river would quickly take them far to the south. They curved the front of the barge like a boat

and the back to hold a rudder. They also made mounts to hold long oars to paddle when the water was too deep and they could not use the poles to push the barge along the river at a faster speed than the natural flow of the water. They planned to stay in the shallows near the left or right shore of the river just in case they came to a rapid or waterfall they could not go over. Just before the barges were complete, the scouts returned and said the river continued to the south as far as they went growing ever wider and they felt assured that it would continue to do so as several Indians had also told them it would.

The barges were rolled over logs into the water and then loaded as rudders were fastened to the back of each barge. The river group and the land group left the same day to see who would reach the port first. They had bid farewell to the people who had showed them such great kindness and hospitality promising to return within a year or two. The land crew moved slowly down the trail they had made in coming north. They had heavy wagons loaded with ore that amounted to the same amount of ore that was loaded on the river barges. The river group at first was moving slow but sure in the current down the river. The speed was not as fast as they wanted but it was constant enough that they rarely had to use the poles to push them along or the long oars to paddle the barge. They traveled by day and spent each night camped on shore. As the miles grew so did the river and so did their speed. They kept a hand on the rudder to keep the barges far enough from shore and sand bars so they would not get stuck.

Another reason they continued to keep the barges close to shore, for they feared that at some time they would hear the sound of great rapids announcing danger ahead. But no such sound came to ear and after several weeks they spied a landmark on the eastern shore. On the high bluff, there stood the stockade outpost they had constructed during their first southern expedition during the first winter. After

resting at the outpost, they built wagons to unload the heavy barges and using manpower to push and pull them on a trail they had made on their very first trip from the east coast port of modern-day Charleston. They had gathered considerable information as well as having contacted settlements that would help develop the resources in several areas.

The group that went by the river route arrived at the port on the eastern coast first. It was just over two month later when the group that had come down the land route arrived at the port. It was decided that the route to the port on the St. Lawrence River was the best while weather permitted. The return route down the great river was better than the overland route while returning however, the overland route was best for going from the port to the mines. One thing they really needed was oxen to pull the wagons and these would have to be shipped from the isle of Briton.

The plans were just about complete for the return voyage back to Rome. Then one night, Jesus was awakened from his sleep. He knew something very terrible had just happened back in Nazareth. He got up, lit a candle, and sought out Joseph whose bedroom was down the hall of the cabin they had built to live in during the winter. He opened the door and went to the bedside of his uncle.

“Uncle Joe,” Jesus said while shaking his uncle from sleep.

“Jesus, what’s wrong?” Uncle Joe said instantly realizing something was wrong as he wiped the sleep from his eyes.

“Something terrible has happened at home,” Jesus said. Joseph could see the concern in Jesus’ eyes reflected in the candle light. “I’m afraid my father, has just been killed in an accident.” He said this not realizing what he was saying until he had actually said the something his subconscious mind told him.

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“Jossi is dead?” Joseph said startled almost gasping as he spoke. “How do you know?”

“I don’t know how I know this terrible thing. However, I must return to see how my mother and the rest of my family are coping with this tragedy,” Jesus said. Joseph could see through the dim light through the tears that were beginning to form in his own eyes that there were tears in Jesus’ eyes as well. He wrapped his arms around the young man and together they wept over the passing of a great man who could never be replaced in their lives. Jesus lost the man who had been his father as he grew up in his childhood. Joseph lost his dearest friend who had protected him during his own childhood and been more of a brother than any other person he would ever know.

The next day, Joseph expedited the preparation to sail back to Rome. He left several men who would continue to prepare for his return with supplies and additional experienced miners who would teach local men the new methods that had been developed to excavate and extract ore from the hills and mountains and transport it to ships on the coast. In less than a week from the night Jesus had awoke and told Joseph of his insight, the ship cast off and sailed north on its voyage back to the port in the Isle of Briton then to Rome and then on to the port in Joppa. Finally, overland to Nazareth.

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Part Eight:  
The Deaths of Joseph of  
Nazareth and Others

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## Chapter 30

### **How Joseph Died**

The axle had worn only slightly and the wobble in the wheel was hardly perceptible unless one was able to raise the wagon and freely spin the wheel. This had happened very slowly as the wagon was fully loaded and slowly pulled by donkeys from the rock quarry. The two donkeys that pulled the wagon had been paired for five years and had worked as a tandem without incident since the beginning. Then one of the pair had miss stepped on a rock with one of its hooves straining its leg, which it now favored. This reduced its ability to pull its share of the load and that put more work on the other donkey that grew unhappier about this situation with each load. The rainy cold weather further added to the misery of both animals.

The weather had another impact that was not fully understood by the sons of Joseph. It slowed the setting of the mortar that was to hold the rocks together in the exterior walls of the large building that was being constructed. While one of the youngest sons, Simon, was cleaning up inside; outside, Joseph told his older sons to leave the braces on longer than they usually did, but the sons did not catch on as to why this was being done. They thought that since the weather was generally miserable that their father was saving this task for a nicer day.

Simon finally ran out of tasks he was assigned to do. He and Judas being the youngest brothers were generally given things to do that their two older brothers did not like to do. Simon looked about the building for something he would like to do before his two older brothers or his father gave him another task. As he came around an outside corner, he almost bumped his head on a support beam. Ah, he thought, by this time these beams are usually removed. I guess they are waiting for better weather to start on them. I can do

something important by starting to take off these support beams. He looked over the numerous support beams and planned how he would tackle this job.

He began by knocking over the stake that held the bottom of the brace in place. Then he could free up the beam and it would fall to the ground. The first came down without too much effort. On trying the second beam, he found it was harder than the first. Then he discovered that by working on every other beam that it was easier. He had completed removing every other support beam on the entire wall and was about to start on the remaining beams. It had been hard work and the rest would be even harder. Before he began, he went inside to rest a bit where his two older brothers were with his father warming their hands over a small fire.

“As soon as Judas returns with the rest of the stones, we will have lunch,” Joseph said and then turned to Simon who had just slipped into the group around the fire and was warming his hands, “What have you been up to? I haven’t seen you around for the last couple of hours.”

“Oh, I have been busy working outside,” Simon answered.

“Playing around, I bet,” his brother Jossi kidded.

“No, I have been doing some important work,” Simon responded.

“Leave him alone, Jossi,” James, the second oldest brother admonished, “at least he is always trying to help rather than trying to figure out some way to pull a prank on someone.”

“You boys settle down,” their father, Joseph demanded as he opened the basket containing the food Mary had prepared for their midday meal. From outside they heard someone shouting. “That must be Judas with the load of rock. James, run and tell him to leave it on the wagon and come to eat.”

James rose along with Jossi and together they raced out the door and around the building to the road to see who would reach the wagon first. Just as they rounded the corner, they saw Judas sitting on the bench of the wagon that appeared stuck. He was lashing out and yelling at the donkeys pulling the wagon. Before they could run and help get the wagon moving, they saw the wagon suddenly lurch over a large rock in the dirt where they pulled off the road and onto the building site. The wagon shot forward toward the building. Judas tried to steer the wagon away from the support beams on the side of the building but something was wrong causing the wagon to veer to the right in spite of Judah's efforts to guide the donkeys to the left.

The wagon hit the first support beam and it fell to the ground. Instantly, James saw the danger. Half of the support beams had been removed. The two boys yelled for their father as they ran to the wagon to grab the donkeys and to try to drive them away from the building. The donkeys brayed and pulled even harder to the right as they pulled the wagon knocking two more support beams down. James saw part of the wall starting to buckle outward. He called for Jossi to leave the donkeys and help him. Each of the brothers grabbed one of the downed support beams and tried to brace them against the wall. While James put his weight and strength to hold the two beams, he directed Jossi to get another beam. He heard his father and his other brothers yelling something as Jossi put another beam in place. The next thing they knew their father was beside them.

“Quick, James, get another beam while I hold these. Jossi, get Judas and the wagon away from the wall,” he commanded.

James had to run a bit farther away to find another beam while Jossi was finally able to get the donkeys to pull the wagon away from the wall. Suddenly, Jossi and Judas cried out in horror,

“Oh God, NO!”

James turned as he heard a sound of breaking timber and rocks crashing against each other and the wall collapsing. He saw the rocks began tumbling down upon his father as the last beam he was trying to brace the wall with cracked and broke.

James screamed, “Father!” as he ran to the pile of stones where his father had been standing trying to hold the support beams. Without anyone saying anything, all four sons began grabbing rocks, pulling them away, and then tossing them clear. Their hands were bloodied by the time they reached the body of their father. As soon as they saw his head and body were crushed by the heavy rocks that had been a wall, they knew he was dead. They were all crying as they tried in vain to revive their father. Then James directed Jossi to run and get their mother, Mary.

“It was my fault,” Judas cried, “If I could only have kept the wagon from running into the beams.”

James tried to compose himself. As the oldest son of the four brothers who were still living at home since Jesus had left, it was now his responsibility to act, as his father would have done in this situation. He choked back the sobs and wiped the tears from his eyes as he walked to the wagon. He then noticed the wheel on the right side was leaning. He took hold of it and shook it. The wobble told him that may have been why the wagon pulled to the right. Then he noticed the donkey on the left had one of its hooves off the ground in an unusual way. He went to it, reached down, and started to pull the hoof up. The donkey brayed and tried to pull it away. He could

tell the animal was in a lot of pain and then saw that the foot was swollen.

“Judas, did you notice the wagon pulling to the right as you drove it here?” James asked.

“Well, come to think of it. I did notice it was harder to keep the donkeys pulling it straight on this last load. As we got closer, it was getting near impossible to keep going straight. When we got over that rock as we pulled off of the road over there, the wagon shot forward and just swerved right into the support beams,” Judas said as he reviewed in his mind what had happened.

“From what I can tell,” James told him, “the wheel on the right is about to fall off the wagon. In addition, the donkey on the left is nearly lame. It was not your fault the wagon swerved into the support beams.”

“It was my fault,” Simon who was nearby cried, “if I only had not removed those beams. I was trying to help and do something important.”

“Simon, you were not present when father told us to leave the support beams in place. I did not know why he decided this until now. The cold and rain must have caused the mortar not to set as fast as it usually does. If those conditions had been different the wall would have held even if all the support beams had been taken down. If I had had just a few more seconds another beam may have held the wall,” James said and then he thought about all these things and how they had happened together. Then he said, “It is not your fault Simon, nor is it Judas’ fault, just as it is not my fault. If father had not come when he did, the wall would have collapsed and killed me and Jossi and possibly Judas as well. Father gave his own life in order to save us.”

James looked up as he heard a mournful cry from his mother, Mary who had just arrived at the building site and saw her husband Joseph laying on the ground covered in blood.

‘Oh Yahweh,’ she cried out, ‘Oh no please my dear Yahweh, NO!’ She ran to Joseph’s body. She dropped down and sat on the ground beside him and cradled his head in her arms. She cried as she slowly rocked back and forth. Their two daughters had also come with Mary and sat down on the rocks by their mother and they as well as all the sons cried and mourned for their father who lay there dead.

Soon, the word spread of the tragedy and gradually most of the town of Nazareth surrounded the scene. As the sun neared the horizon, several men helped the sons carry their father to the family home and placed him on the dining table that had been cleared off. James directed everyone but the family to exit the house. Then, Mary and the daughters removed the torn blood-stained clothing and begin to wash the body of Joseph and then dressed him in his best clothing.

To prepare Joseph for viewing, they covered him with a blanket and placed his arms outside with his hands folded together. Then they surrounded the body with flowers. For two days, it seemed like every person, young and old who lived in Nazareth and surrounding villages and cities as far away as Jerusalem passed by the body of Joseph lying on a table in their home to pay their respect for this great man, his wife, and their children. There was not a person who had ever known Joseph who did not like and respect him.

On the third day, his body was covered with spices and wrapped with linen as the burial custom was and then was placed in a tomb



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that had been prepared several years before. As Mary finally left the tomb, she called out to her dead husband, “Rest for a while, my love, till I join you in Paradise.”

James took charge of the family. After a week of mourning, he directed the efforts of his brothers as they rebuilt the wall that had collapsed and then finished the building. James and Jossi seemed overnight to be transformed from boyhood to manhood. Even, Judas stepped up and assumed responsibilities he had previously slacked. Simon also began to look for ways to help and was ever careful to be sure of what to do and when to do it. Yet, secretly in Simon’s heart, he along with Judas felt a sense of guilt in contributing to their father’s death. It would take many years before they were able to shake free from the guilt and realize it was simply a matter of time and chance. Really, nobody’s fault, it just happened.

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## Chapter 31

### **John [the Baptist] Grows Up**

During the years, after he had helped to find his cousin Jesus in the Temple, John had become a shepherd. He loved being out on the hillsides and in the wilderness as he watched after the sheep of several families in Juttah. He became very proficient with a sling and had even killed several wolves that had gotten too close to the sheep he was tending. He spent the winter months at home with his parents. His father, Zacharias, and his mother, Elisabeth, were growing very old.

They had finally given up trying to get John to follow his father occupation by becoming a priest in the Temple. The family had returned to their family home in Juttah from a home they had lived in for many years in Jerusalem. Zacharias had become too feeble to serve in the Temple. John would watch his parents as they passed their days sitting together or working on household chores together. No matter what they were doing, they were always together. There was always a smile on their faces and they simply beamed whenever he entered the room or passed by them. He would ask if they needed anything and each time they would smile and say they had everything they ever needed.

For several years, John had made sure that there was always someone to look after his aged parents while he was away tending the sheep. When he was just past twenty, he returned home after herding the flocks out of the hills until it was time for their owners to keep them in pens during the winter months. He found his parents in their home sitting at the table talking when he came in the door. After greeting them, he came over and sat down at the table after

being beckoned by his mother. For some reason he felt uncomfortable as he looked at their faces. Neither was smiling.

“We just got word from my cousin, Mary. It seems her husband was killed in an accident,” Elisabeth told him.

“Joseph is dead?” John repeated sadly. “How did it happen?”

“It was at a construction site,” Zacharias told him. “It seems a number of things went wrong and a large wall of stone collapsed on him and crushed him. He was buried three days ago and the word from Mary just reached us.”

“How terrible, this is tragic,” John said. His eyes felt moist and he could now see that both his parent’s eyes were red from tears shed before he came into the house. “What will the family do? Who will provide for them?”

“Mary says they will be fine,” his mother responded. “Her sons are strong lads and can do the work of grown men. Their father has taught them well and they are capable builders even though young they are well experienced.”

“What of Jesus?” John asked. “Is he still off traveling the world with Joseph of Arimathea? When will he be home?”

“The last Mary heard from him, he and his uncle had begun exploring northward in that new land to the west,” she answered. “Word travels very slow and it has been taking a couple of years for a message to be sent and then an answer returned from that far away.”

“I would like to go and pay my respects to Mary and the family,” John said.

“That would be a fine thing to do as your father and I are not able to travel such distances anymore,” his mother told him. “Tell Mary

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if she would like to come and visit, we would welcome her any time.”

John quickly put clothing, food, and other necessities he needed to travel to Nazareth in a leather travel bag and soon was at the door about to leave.

“Are you sure you will be alright while I am gone?” he asked his parents.

“We will be fine,” Elisabeth answered her son. “Go see if there is anything they need just in case.”

John was used to being on his own and traveling over the rough countryside. He skirted Jerusalem on the east side and made his way up to Nazareth. Along the way, he ate from a pouch that contained food his mother had prepared for him. He also found a beehive and was able to draw out raw honey with the honeycomb to eat. He had come to realize while in the wilderness shepherding sheep that for some reason honeybees would not sting him when he took honey from their hive. He had also learned that locusts were very nourishing and enjoyed the crunch and taste of eating them roasted on an open fire. These things supplemented what his mother had fixed him and gave him energy to speedily complete his journey.

He approached the house that had been the home of Mary and Joseph near midday. He marveled at its size and then remembered that nearly every time he had visited there, that Joseph was adding a new room or expanding it in some way. The front door was open so he went up to it and said with a loud voice, “Hello, anyone home?”

He heard someone coming his way from a back room. It was Judas, one of the youngest sons, who came to the door. “John,” he

exclaimed, reaching out and hugging his cousin. “How are you? It is so good to see you,” Judas asked.

“Fine, fine,” John replied. “How are you all doing? How is your mother, Mary taking your father’s death?”

Judas smile turned to a frown, “She is doing fairly well. It was such a shock. We have all shed so many tears that you would think the well would run dry, but then the tears start again when we think of father being gone.”

Judas led John to an open porch at the rear of the house. They found Mary wrapped in a blanket sitting in a swing watching some birds splashing in some wide bowls she kept full of water. She turned and saw John and rose to meet him. Without a word, John wrapped his arms around her and together they wept for several minutes.

“Mary, I am so sorry for your loss and the loss we all share,” John said with great difficulty between sobs. “My mother and father wished they could be here to comfort you as well. He was such a great and wonderful man.”

Mary finally composed herself and bid John to sit with her. “Tell me how your mother, Elisabeth, and your father is doing?”

“As well as to be expected. They have long ago past 90 years of age and have slowed down a lot.”

“I must go to visit with them very soon,” Mary responded. After a few minutes of silence, she said to him, “Stay with us a while and when it is time for you to go; then I will go with you to see them.”

“They would appreciate that very much,” John answered. “But, are you sure you should be traveling at a time like this?”

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“Actually, I need to get away for a short while,” Mary said. “I have been meaning to visit your mother for years now and now I realize that important things must not be put off too long or they will be lost and not able to be recovered.”

That evening when three other sons of Joseph returned from work, they were greeted by their cousin John and an extra fine evening meal. For the first time since the tragedy, the sons were able to smile and feel a small measure of happiness return. During the week that followed, John was taken to the work site. He saw the wall that had collapsed and killed Joseph had just been rebuilt. Though the mortar had firmly set, the braces were still in place. The building was to be the home of one of the wealthier citizens of Nazareth.

John mentioned that their mother wished to visit his parents as soon as his visit was over. They all agreed that was a good idea. It was suggested that one of their sisters go with her. Then they thought about sending, Judas, as well. Since the accident, he was not able to go to the building site without breaking down and crying the whole time he was there. He was sent home and told to stay there until he was through grieving. But it was not grief so much as guilt that Judas felt. He remained troubled, as he felt responsible for their father’s death, as he had driven the cart that knocked down several supports that had caused the wall to fall and kill his father.

Even though there were multiple things that contributed to the wall collapsing, he still could not shake his feeling of guilt. Mary tried a different approach one day as she sat with Judas trying to reason with him. She told him that his intent was to help and it was not his fault the wheel was worn and one of the donkeys had hurt its foot. She asked him if it was Simon’s fault that he had removed several braces and he was responsible for their father’s death. He

objected and strenuously denied that it was Simon's fault. He was not present when their father instructed that the support beams would be left up.

Then she stated emphatically that it was not the fault of anyone that Joseph had died. She told him that their father had given his life to save his sons and that for Judas or any of her sons to feel guilty detracted from Joseph's sacrifice. After considerable discussion among the older sons, they finally decided that they could make do without Judas for a while so he could go with their mother as well. That evening they told Mary that they thought Judas and their oldest sister should go with her to see Elisabeth and Zacharias in Juttah. They would be most helpful especially on her return trip. Mary agreed.

Two days later, they loaded a wagon pulled by a pair of oxen and began their trip to Juttah. Along the way, they camped to the side of the road where they fixed a meal over an open fire. Mary and the oldest daughter slept in a bed fixed in the wagon while John and Judas slept on the ground wrapped in blankets as the nights were growing colder.

They finally arrived at the home of Elisabeth and Zacharias. John opened the door and ushered them in. Elisabeth nearly jumped from her chair when she saw Mary enter. Mary ran to her and they hugged each other. There were tears but, on this occasion, they were tears of joy. Mary and Elisabeth suddenly felt like it was nearly twenty plus years before, as they talked oblivious of anyone else around them. They went into Elisabeth's bedroom while the others remained in the main room sitting around a crackling fire.



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“I don’t know what all they are talking about, but they sure are having a good time,” Zacharias said with a smile.

“Mom is acting like a kid again,” Judas commented.

“I’m glad she is able to find some joy,” the oldest daughter acknowledged.

“This will do them both some good,” John added.

Later the oldest daughter fixed a meal and set it out on the table with the help of Judas and John. As they all began to find a place around the table, Mary and Elisabeth finally came out of the bedroom. They were still smiling and held hands as they walked to the table. They sat together on one side while Zacharias and John sat at each end of the table. Judas and his oldest sister sat on the other side. After Zacharias gave thanks to Yahweh for their food, the conversation at the table was lively and all praised the wonderful tasting meal.

“Some young man is going to get a fine bride one of these days,” Zacharias said as he smiled at Mary’s oldest daughter. She just blushed but did not say anything but smiled at her mother. Mary and Elisabeth both shook their heads, Yes, as they knowingly smiled at each other.

“I remember a time when another young lady was just bubbling with hope and happiness about a young carpenter...,” Elisabeth said but then put her hand to her mouth and said, “Oh... I am so sorry Mary. I should never have said that.”

Mary’s smile went away for a second when she heard Elisabeth’s words. Then her smile returned.

“It’s okay, Elisabeth,” Mary said with an inner peace, “I want to remember every moment I have had especially after Joseph came into my life. There will come a day when we will be together again never to part.”

Mary determined to spend the winter there with Elisabeth and Zacharias. She sent Judas home but kept her oldest daughter with her. As the winter months passed, Mary saw her cousin and best friend’s life begin to quickly fade as well as that of her husband. She realized that her visit had been just in time. During the early hours one night, Zacharias passed away in his sleep. Then just before the sun rose to end that same night, Elisabeth joined her husband in leaving this world never again to be parted.

## Chapter 32

### **Jesus Returns to Visit His Mother Mary**

The ship had to make several stops along its voyage to Rome. Jesus was growing more impatient with each stop and wanted to catch the next ship going anywhere near the coastline of Judea or Galilee. Joseph of Arimathea worked as quickly as he could in completing his responsibilities as Nobilis DE curio. He had left men who would continue to develop the mining operation in Briton and the Lands in the West. He reported on the possible resources to be had in developing the mining operations in the far Western continent.

Joseph's return to Rome was well received as it solved a problem that had come up. The Parthian Empire had unexpectedly tendered a request to Rome to meet and discuss increased trade between the two empires. Until Joseph had arrived, the Senate was in a quandary as to whom they would send to represent Rome's interests. Joseph was the perfect man for the task. He was told to quickly sail to Joppa and then travel over land to Parthia. Development of the new resources in the West could wait.

Joseph thought it was amazing how things work out. He had been a bit concerned that Rome would demand that he quickly return to Briton and the West and now he had been ordered to go exactly where he wanted and needed to go. He quickly returned to the ship.

"I was just about ready to jump ship in order to get to my homeland," Jesus said to Uncle Joe.

"I am glad you did not," Uncle Joe replied. "I have been given a commission to go to Parthia. Now I have been instructed to use the

fastest ship in our fleet and that will get us to your homeland in a matter of weeks rather than months it would have taken if you had caught a ride with some other trade ship.”

“Parthia?” Jesus said as his mind filled with images of events that had happened when he was just a boy of two. “What a wonderful opportunity to see some ‘old friends.’”

Joseph raised his eyebrows in curiosity but decided not to pursue further discussion.

They had their personal things transferred to a new sleek sailing ship across the harbor. It did not take much time to finish loading some light cargo and just a couple of other passengers and for their ship set sail. The voyage seemed very short after having sailed what seemed like half way around the world. As he had throughout the voyage from the West, Jesus caused them to have a strong tail wind that drove the ship quickly to Joppa. Joseph had a few things to do in Joppa and wanted to stop by his family home in Arimathea to see his family before continuing to Nazareth. Therefore, Jesus made separate arrangements to go straight on to Nazareth.

Jesus arrived in Nazareth in the early afternoon. He was tired and dusty from the road. He paused before the front door. He had been gone so long he felt like a stranger. Then he knocked on the door to his family home rather than just opening the door and going in. The door opened and his younger brother, Judas stood there. “Jesus!” he shouted as he grabbed his arm and pulled him and his travel bag into the front room. Soon, the whole house was filled with voices filled with glee, shouting, “Jesus, Jesus is home.” He stood in the center of the room surrounded by his brothers and sisters. Suddenly, the room was hushed as their mother; Mary came into the room from the

kitchen. She walked to Jesus and kissed him and then put her arms around him.

“Mother is smiling again,” James said somewhat startled.

The others just stood there in wonder. This was the first time their mother, Mary had smiled since returning from Juttah where she had buried her dear cousin Elisabeth and her husband, Zacharias, on the same day. What a terrible year this had been for her what with the death of her beloved husband, Joseph just a few months before that.

“Oh, mother,” Jesus said with tears in his eyes, “if only I had been here. He would not have died.”

“It is alright, Jesus,” Mary said as she looked up into his tear-filled eyes. “Only Yahweh knows when it is best for each of us to pass on into eternity from this mortal life. To give one’s life to save the lives of others can only bring joy in the afterlife. One day I shall join him when it is my turn. In the meantime, I have the memories that live in my heart, which I will cherish each day. Sometimes, I can even see him just as I could see you while you have been away and that comforts my heart. But, for now, you are home and I cannot but be happy and full of joy for such an occasion. My, my, you have grown as tall as a tree.” She said as she leaned back as if she was looking up at a tall tree. This brought a laugh to all including Mary and Jesus.

After the evening meal they all sat around and talked well into the night. They wanted to hear about what Jesus had been doing. However, he would not venture into his own account until he heard how the family was doing since his father had died. James assured him that the family construction business had continued to prosper which the others including his mother agreed. Then he told of the places he had traveled to and the people he had met.

Jesus cautioned them not to tell anyone other than direct family members who he was while he was there. It had been about eight

years since he left with his uncle. His appearance had changed so dramatically that few outside his family would now recognize him. He asked them to tell others that he was a relative from another town farther south in Judea. The others remembered what their mother had told them about Jesus' birth in Bethlehem and the horrible things Herod had done to all children born there around the same time Jesus had been born. This had happened so long ago that now it all seemed like a made-up story and some of his brothers and sisters no longer believed that there was anything really special about Jesus other than he was their oldest brother but they agreed to do what he cautioned them to do.

The next day, Jesus along with his mother, Mary went to the tomb of Joseph. They sat on a stone bench his brothers had made for Mary to sit when she visited the grave of her beloved husband. Afterward, they went by the building that had the wall that had collapsed and killed Joseph. A memorial plaque made of stone that marked the place where he died had been purchased by the owner of the house and he had it placed into the wall in tribute to this great man that all the city respected and loved. Jesus looked up at the size of the wall.

"I had no idea how thick and high this wall had been," he said. "There must have been several tons of stone and mortar that fell on father even if a small section had collapsed. What a nice gesture it was for the owner to commission this plaque honoring my father."

Mary smiled, as she knew that Jesus had loved his earthly father so dearly.

## Part Nine:

# The Christ Goes to Parthia

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## Chapter 33

### **Preparation for Trip to Parthia**

Jesus with his mother Mary went to the site of a new building that was being constructed by his brothers. It was larger and taller than buildings he remembered helping his father build while he was young and still at home. He noted the bracing and support structures and beams were by far much stronger than was necessary. Lessons learned late, he thought. Judas saw them from a window opening and yelled to them. He had finally realized that he was not at fault in his father's death and was back at work. He had also become more dedicated to learn and work as part of a team, each doing his part. Soon, all four brothers took pride in showing Jesus around and pointing out the features of the building. It would be the residence of a man involved in trade throughout the Roman Empire. By coincident, the man happened to stop by to see the progress of the building at that very time, while Jesus was there visiting with his brothers.

"I did not think I had seen or met you before," the man, named Thomas, stated after Jesus' brother James introduced him as a relative who traveled a great deal.

"I would venture that you are also not from around here," Jesus replied.

"No, I am from Caesarea, my wife is from Nazareth. We have a home there but my wife insists on having a home here as well so she can visit with her family when I am away," Thomas responded.

"Jesus is a world traveler. He just returned from Rome after traveling to the Isle of Briton and even further west," Judas announced.

“Really,” Thomas said as he looked at Jesus with more interest.

“I have been the ward of Joseph of Arimathea for the past eight years. We have traveled far,” Jesus admitted.

“Joseph of Arimathea?” Thomas said with a surprised look on his face. “I just received a post that I am to make arrangements for the Nobilis DE curio to travel to the city of Asaac in Parthia.”

“My uncle will be arriving here in about two or three weeks. He had business to attend to and he wanted to spend some time as well with his family in Arimathea.”

“Oh my,” Thomas said with a concerned look on his face. “With what the post said concerning Joseph’s trip, I had hoped to have a couple of months to get things ready. If you will please excuse me, I must return to Caesarea immediately.”

With that, the man walked out the door opening and climbed into his carriage. After sharp words to the driver, the carriage took off down the dirt road sending rocks and dust flying.

Jesus had rested for just over a week when he told his mother that he would soon be leaving with his uncle and that he needed to go to Caesarea to oversee the final preparation for the trip to Parthia. During his first day at home, he had asked that his family not tell others about his return. She did not question his reason. She had learned from his letters that he was preparing for something very special in this life as well as for the life to come. He would stay as long as he could but if others began to ask questions or intrude, he would have to leave sooner than he really wanted to. He spent most of his time really getting to know his brothers and sisters who were growing to maturity in such a fine manner. They would begin to fragment into families of their own in the soon coming years which

he would miss while being gone from home. He was glad for the opportunity to complete a mission in other lands while he was still young. These places did not have such strong traditions as the Jews had.

“Mother,” Jesus began when he was alone with his mother, Mary. “I have come to understand that I must go to our brothers and sisters of the house of Israel who no longer live in Judah and Galilee and tell them of things our Yahweh has revealed to me.”

“But they are so scattered,” she replied, “to the ends of the earth. How can you possibly go to them? What will you tell them?”

“Perhaps I will not be able to see them all, but I must try to go to as many as I am able,” Jesus began explaining to her. “I have learned from my travels that within groups scattered from the land of Israel to the far east and far west are clusters of people who are of our common lineage to Jacob, grandson of Abraham whose name Yahweh changed to Israel. Some of these still retain faith and hope in Yahweh that He would send the Christ. They believe this Christ will take away the sins of Yahweh’s people, Israel and return David to the throne of Israel. They do not realize that the second part of returning David to the throne of Israel will not happen at this time. As Yahweh leads me, I must seek those who are ready to receive the hope of Israel and salvation by true faith in Yahweh as well as in me, the Christ, His Son.”

“That is why this trip to Parthia is so important to you?” Mary noted.

“Yes,” Jesus answered. “My life’s mission was announced in Parthia to the Magi at the time of my birth. It is time to visit there and confirm the prophecies they believe in have truly come to pass. They saw a child, now they will see one who is growing to be a man.”

Such a man, Mary thought. My son and my Elohim.

Jesus turned to her and smiled. He had heard her thoughts as if she had spoken them aloud.

“This is really a beginning of sorts,” he told her. “As I have begun doing in the western continent and now in Parthia, I will openly acknowledge that I am the Son of Yahweh, sent by Yahweh to offer salvation to those of Israel who will hear me and keep the Words of my Heavenly Father. Yahweh has energized me with the Holy Spirit and I will perform those miracles that will reveal to them that I am the prophesied Christ. This will also strengthen the faith of those who seek salvation. Though few will heed this call, in time my words will reach the ends of the world.

“After Parthia, I must return to the Isle of Briton and then I must go to lands to the far West. I can hear the prayers of people there calling to Yahweh. For them it is time for me to answer their call. When my tasks there are finished, I will be thirty years of age and I will return here for the final mission of my life here on earth.”

“Thirty years of age? That is ten years from now...you must be gone that long? A final mission...what final mission?” Mary responded with trepidation and fear in her eyes.

“I am sorry Mother. It is dangerous for me to be here so I must go away till then. But, do not fear, Mother,” he said taking her hand in his and looking deeply into her eyes. “My mission here in Judea and Galilee will not take place for many more years. Do not begin to grieve concerning that time as well for while your heart will be filled with pain; soon afterwards there will come a time for great joy that will wash away all your painful memories.”

“Like giving birth to a baby,” she mused, “There is a time of great pain and suffering but it is quickly forgotten when a mother first sees and holds her newborn baby in her arms.”

“Exactly,” Jesus affirmed. “I could not have expressed it more succinctly.”

## Chapter 34

### **Arriving in Parthia's Capital**

Jesus ended up spending nearly a month at his home with his family in Nazareth. He visited Caesarea several times to check on preparations for the journey to Parthia. Finally, Joseph of Arimathea arrived. The family loved their uncle and thrilled to his telling of his exploits into faraway lands filled with strange sights and people. On the third day, a visitor arrived. It was Thomas of Caesarea, who informed them that all was in readiness for their journey to Parthia. After a few more days, they bid farewell, then Joseph and Jesus made their way to Caesarea and made a final inspection of the caravan.

This caravan was not like the one that had come from Parthia to Bethlehem with the Magi and took two years to make the journey. This one contained only a carriage and one wagon each pulled by four young and strong oxen. There were also six donkeys for the men to ride on when not walking or riding in the wagons. There were just a few servants to set up tents at night and take care of menial tasks. There was a small contingency of Roman soldiers consisting of a Centurion who had his own chariot and driver and four regular soldiers to provide protection from wild animals or highway bandits. The entire caravan was prepared with the primary function of traveling swiftly so 'creature comforts' were minimal. Still, it took six months to make it to Asaac, one of the main Capital cities of Parthia. Word of the coming caravan had reached the Emperor months before. He learned this caravan was small but it contained a Nobilis DE curio of Rome on a mission to improve trade between Rome and Parthia. He had one of his generals ensure the caravan had a safe and unencumbered journey once it crossed into Parthian territory.

Jesus, as he had done so often on the journey, was riding in the chariot of the Centurion when they approached the gate of the city of Asaac. A herald rang out as the gate opened to reveal a line of soldiers on both sides of the street holding back citizens who sought to get a peek at the strangers entering their city. There was no cheering, just curious spectators lining the way to the palace of the Emperor. Jesus looked to each side as they proceeded down the main roadway. Finally, he saw what he was looking for. He excused himself from the Centurion and jumped down from the chariot while it still moved. He quickly slipped between the soldiers and spectators on the right side and was gone. Joseph of Arimathea knew where Jesus was going for, they had discussed it the previous night in their tent as they had prepared to sleep.

Jesus had seen the spire of the temple down a side street they had passed. It did not take him long to make his way back to the street and then onward until he stood at the doorway. He removed the sandals from his feet, opened the door, and walked in. He heard someone praying aloud in the large room where people came to worship. Quietly, he walked toward the front of the room where he found three men on their knees as one of them held his arms upward and spoke his words to the Yahweh of his faith. Just as Jesus came up to them and stopped, the voice of the man also stopped. This man turned. As he did so the other two, one to each side of him also turned. Without a word, all three fell on their faces before Jesus and began to worship him. He smiled at them and then spoke.

“My dear friends,” his voice was strong and clear. “How did you know it was I?”

All three slowly raised their heads and the one in the middle spoke.

“Lord,” Lux said as he looked into the face of Jesus, “The Holy Spirit told us you would arrive today and for us to await you here.”

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“Lux,” he said and then to the other two, “Rav, Mors, I have longed for so long to see you again.”

“Lord, it has been nearly eighteen years,” Rav said, “but, I would have known you anywhere and at any time.”

“Lord,” Mors added, “we have often heard from your earthly father during the past years of your travels. How is your family?”

“My friends,” Jesus answered, “my father passed away just about a year ago. The rest of my family including my mother are doing very well and we have adjusted to our loss.”

“Oh my,” Lux responded. “We too are so sorry for your loss. He was a good, no I should say, great man.”

“Yes, he was. No one could ask for a better man to be his father.”

“And your uncle, Joseph?” Rav asked.

“He has been like a father, my tutor, but more often as a friend to me. He is fine, thank you, and is here with me,” Jesus answered, “Or, I should say, I am here with him because his trip here provided this opportunity for me to visit with you.”

“Where will you stay?” Lux asked, “We have rooms here where you can sleep, rest, eat, and refresh yourself.”

“Yes, please join us,” Mors pleaded.

“I must see my uncle first before I can agree to stay here. But rest assured we will have several days to visit and renew our friendship.”

Jesus was finally able to leave and began making his way toward the Emperor’s palace. It was not hard to find the palace as its upper floors reached high above the other buildings in the city. As he came to what he was sure of as the main entrance, he saw the Centurion that had provided security on their trip was standing by the guards near the entrance.

“Well, hello young man,” he said to Jesus, “The Nobilis DE curio told me to remain here awaiting your return.”

“Thank you, sir,” Jesus said to him, “Shall I enter and see the DE curio now or wait until he returns from seeing the Emperor?”

“A servant told me a short while before you came that I was to escort you to a chamber prepared for you and the DE curio,” the Centurion replied.

The guards parted and Jesus and the Centurion entered the palace. A servant was waiting for them and bid them to follow him as he led them down several long passageways and then opened a door to a room. Jesus entered and the Centurion stopped and assumed a guard position outside the door. He found his uncle sitting on a lounge chair with a bowl half-full of small round berries that he had been eating.

“Did you save any for me?” Jesus asked.

“There is another bowl beside the chair there,” Joseph of Arimathea answered pointing to a lounge chair with a table beside it.”

Jesus walked over to the chair and dropped into it. He smiled and picked up the bowl and examined the small round fruit it contained. Then he put one in his mouth and smiled as he savored the sweet taste of the fruit.

“So, how did your visit with the Emperor go?” Jesus asked after consuming several pieces of fruit.

“I have not seen the Emperor as of yet,” Joseph answered. “It seems that he must delay seeing us to preserve the appearance that Parthia is not subservient to Rome. Anyway, I am tired from our long travels and a bath and a good bed to sleep on is certainly a more



enjoyable way to finish this day than standing before nobility for several hours pleading our case to expand our trade agreements.”

“I am all for that,” Jesus said, “I was wondering if I would be staying here in the palace or if I should make other arrangements?”

“Of course, you are to stay here,” Joseph announced, “I cannot have my nephew sleeping in the streets and chancing getting mugged or stepped on by a camel.”

Jesus laughed and then said, “My friends in the temple wish for me to make my accommodations with them while visiting here in the city.”

“Oh yes, the Magi,” Joseph said, “Wow, after all these years they still remember you?”

“Just like it was yesterday for them as well as me,” Jesus answered.

“Well, we will see about you spending some time with them. My time will be mostly spent sitting around tables negotiating with others of the Emperor’s court. I expect we will be here at least a couple of weeks. Of course, this trip is only the beginning. We will open the channels so to speak but it will take others to complete all the arrangements. Things like this take a lot of time.

“I remember the first time I went with my father to the Isle of Briton. He was concluding an agreement with the king there. He had already spent months negotiating with the court and the final arrangements still took another three weeks. I had a lot of time to run around the countryside and made several friends whose acquaintance has served me well since I took over my father’s shipping and trade business as well as formalized our company’s dealing with Rome. I can hardly wait to return to the West and see how things are going with the mining operations and the smelting of ore for shipment to Rome.”

Jesus' mind turned to thoughts of the West and his desire to return and expand his journey into areas he had only heard about on his first trip to the western lands. After two more days, Joseph was finally given an audience with the Emperor. Everything went as he expected and the Emperor was cordial. He was pleased to acknowledge the presence of the nephew of the Nobilis DE curio as a sign that there would be a friendly and peaceful forum to negotiate expanding trade between the two world powers that would truly benefit both.

Afterwards, Joseph told Jesus that he was free to go and stay wherever he wished. The only thing that complicated his activities was a soldier had to accompany him at all times. The four soldiers took turns performing this task. Soon, all the soldiers in the Roman contingent learned that it was not like being with other Roman citizens they had experienced in other cities especially Rome and with Senators and other nobles.

Jesus treated all the soldiers with respect and concern for their welfare. He always ensured they had a place to relax out of the heat or other uncomfortable circumstances. The soldiers were served the same food that was set before Jesus and those whom he visited. While Jesus often invited the soldiers to sit with and join in on conversations with his hosts, only one of the four soldiers who guarded him became friendly enough to do so.

Jesus had met numerous individuals in Parthia, had long conversations with them, and revealed himself, as the Son of Yahweh to those whom he knew would accept this fact. Then one day he was summoned to the home of a man he had met the previous week. This man was of the house of Arsacid. His daughter had become gravely ill. Jesus went to her bedside and placed his hand

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on her forehead. The young girl's breathing was becoming very shallow. Her temperature radiated heat that could be felt even before touching her skin. She was dying.

"She has a very severe case of food poisoning. Her life is passing," Jesus told the father.

"Oh Lord, she is my only child. Please can you help her," the father pleaded as tears filled his eyes and he wept openly beside his wife not caring what anyone thought of him.

Jesus looked at them and then took pity.

"Do you believe that Yahweh can heal and save your daughter's life?" he asked the father.

"Yes, Lord," he responded.

Then Jesus placed his hands on her and looked upward and prayed aloud, "Father, be glorified by restoring this young child's life."

At first the young girl had suddenly jerked and then straightened out on the bed and then went limp.

"My friends, your child," Jesus said as he stepped back. The father and mother cried out expecting to see their child lying dead. However, in astonishment they saw their daughter beginning to open her eyes and trying to sit up in bed. They quickly knelt down by the bedside. They felt her skin no longer was hot with an extreme temperature.

"Mommy," she said, "Daddy, I thought I was going away. I hurt so bad all I wanted was for the pain to stop. What happened? The pain is gone. I feel good now."

After the parents had hugged and kissed their daughter for a several minutes, they turned to Jesus and thanked him.

The father then said, "I had heard and considered that you might be the Christ we have been waiting for. Now I know you truly are the Son of Yahweh. My Lord and my Elohim." He and his wife bowed and knelt on their knees before Jesus.

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Jesus generally went to the temple each day. He would sit and teach from scrolls that contained the Holy Scriptures. Things like how he fulfilled the prophecies of the coming Christ. He also spent time teaching them how a person should repent of their sins, live righteously before Yahweh, and he gave the hope of salvation to those who had faith in Yahweh. Many went out to surrounding cities and told of having met the Christ. While they did not like hearing it, they began to understand that the first coming of the Christ was as a lamb to the slaughter. That in time, Jesus would lay down his life as a sacrifice for all of mankind's sins so they could be reconciled to Yahweh.

The three Magi did not want to consider that Jesus would in time be sacrificed. In fact, they tried to convince Jesus to consider possibly seeking to become the new Emperor of Parthia. The present Emperor's health was failing and soon the Megistanes and the Arsacids would have to meet and decide on who would become the next Emperor. Since Jesus' bloodline was in accord with the prerequisites, he could be considered as an heir to the throne of Parthia. There were numerous individuals of both houses that had learned about Jesus and would support his bid to become Emperor. As emperor, he could have a standing army to protect him.

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Jesus kindly thanked them all for their good intentions but assured them that his destiny was left to Yahweh to decide, not man. He must and would do what his heavenly Father as well as he had determined from the foundation of the world.

.....

It was nearly a month and a half before Joseph concluded the initial negotiations to expand the trade treaty between Rome and Parthia. After another week, they were able to complete preparations for their caravan to return to Judea. On the day they began their journey home, a multitude surrounded Jesus, begging him to stay. He told them to stand fast in their faith in him and their Yahweh. The Holy Scrolls and the Spirit of Yahweh in them would guide and comfort them as they lived this way of truth and shared it with others who looked for hope in this life and the everlasting life to come.

$\mathcal{R}$  of  $\mathcal{D}$

Part Ten:  
The Christ's Final Visit to the  
West and Then Returns to His  
Homeland to Start His Final  
Ministry

$\mathcal{R}$  of  $\mathcal{D}$



## Chapter 35

### **Jesus Stops by Nazareth**

Jesus and Joseph of Arimathea entered the home of Mary in Nazareth just as the sun reached the horizon on the sixth day of the week. The entire house was quickly filled with excited voices as two more plates were set at the dining table.

“I was wondering if you would make it before sunset,” Mary said, “The Pharisees would have been angered if they had seen you traveling after sunset.”

“Yes,” Jesus answered with a sigh, “Their traditions have backed the keeping of the Sabbath to sunset on the day before the Sabbath actually begins at sunrise on the seventh day of the week. In regard to the Sabbath and other Commandments of Yahweh, their traditions reveal that they do not believe Yahweh’s law is good enough. They have to keep modifying it to make it fit their ideas and way of life instead of the reverse. Anyway, I will welcome the Sabbath in the morning just as Yahweh taught Israel with the manna when Moses led them in the wilderness.”

They all gathered about the table, sat down, and then all held the hand of those to their side. Mary nodded to Jesus and he offered a prayer of thanks to Yahweh for their safe journey, their good health, providing all their needs and the provisions of this meal to nourish their bodies. His ‘Amen’ was joined by the rest also saying Amen.

Everyone talked as bowls, platters, and plates were passed around and food soon filled each individual’s plate. Roast lamb was the main dish and there were fresh vegetables from the garden in the back yard. The smell of freshly baked bread filled the room as Mary brought out another full basket that was passed around for all to enjoy. After dinner, Jesus and Mary went and sat down together on

a couch in a sitting area apart from the dining table where Uncle Joseph kept the rest of the family laughing and astonished with his tales.

“Are you going to say anything to the elders?” Mary asked.

“No, not at this time. When it is time for the children of Israel in this land to learn the truth, I will return and begin to teach them. At that time, the elders and religious leaders will seek to kill me,” Jesus declared.

Mary shuddered and her eyes began to water. Jesus reached up and wiped a tear from her cheek as it slowly began to run from her eye.

“Mother,” he softly spoke, “that will not be for years to come. I must wait until I reach the age of thirty before I can begin my ministry here. That is the custom of this people. However, that is not the custom of others in other parts of the world. I was welcomed by many as the Christ in Parthia, in the Isle of Briton, and in the western continent even before I turned twenty. I will return to the West and when I turn thirty years of age, I will return. I must stay away from this land or Satan will seek to have me killed in a way that will not accomplish Yahweh’s purpose for my life here on earth. When I return from the West and after forty days of further preparation, I will spend at least three years ministering to Israel in this land. Great things will take place such as miracles that no man here has seen before. The words that Yahweh, my heavenly Father, speaks to me, I will then share with all who will hear me. Mother, do not fear or be anxious. All that Yahweh has prophesied will come to pass. Even the sorrow you will experience will be brief and will be followed by exceeding joy.” Mary was comforted by his words but it was hard for her to smile as she pondered all he had told her especially of his having to be away for so long a time.

A few days later, they had an unexpected visitor. The knock on the door was loud coming from a very strong hand. Opening the door, Jesus saw the strong young man standing in the doorway was his cousin John. Both shouted a greeting and hugged each other like bears.

“I knew I would find you here,” John told him.

“How could you know I was here visiting?” Jesus questioned.

“A few nights ago, I was sleeping soundly on a hillside and I began to have a dream. I dreamed I was standing on a mountaintop and was blowing a trumpet to announce the coming of the king. I turned around and there you were standing beside me. Then a voice whispered in my ear, ‘Go to Nazareth, and see Jesus.’ I awoke and went to the families who owned the sheep. I beat on their doors and woke them up one by one until I had spoken to all of them to find another shepherd as I had an important task to do and had to leave. So, here I am,” John told him.

They went out on the back porch for privacy and talked until the evening meal. Jesus told him that he now knew that he was the Christ, Yahweh’s Son. He had a mission to accomplish in the far West but then would return to Judea to begin his ministry here when he turned thirty years of age. John told Jesus he also had a mission from Yahweh. During the next ten years, he would live in and around Jerusalem. He felt an urgent need to study the Holy Scriptures written on scrolls and kept at the Temple in Jerusalem. He was beginning to understand why Yahweh had been preparing him by living on the hillsides and in the wilderness as he tended sheep. He was a rugged outdoorsman and in time, he would have an important purpose. After a few more days visiting, John departed for Jerusalem.

Jesus knew he would be gone on this trip for about nine years. A lot can happen in nine years he thought. Soon, he had to leave and travel to Arimathea. From there he would travel with his uncle to Joppa and then other ports till they reached the far West. The morning came for his departure. He hugged and kissed all his brothers and sisters and lastly his mother, Mary, bidding them all farewell until he saw them again. He had already packed one donkey and placed a pad and blanket on the back of the second donkey he would ride on his journey to Arimathea. Each day he would swap the pack and ride on the other donkey as he journeyed. He waved and started down the road.

He spent only one night at the home of his uncle in Arimathea and then they quickly made their way to Joppa. The ship was loaded, only awaiting them so they departed immediately after they and their luggage was place aboard. They again set sail on another long journey beyond the Pillars of Hercules and beyond the Isle of Briton. The land in the West continued to be thought of in almost a mythical way so few had heard of it and fewer still had ever been there and returned.

## Chapter 36

### **More Journeys Across the Western Continents**

The ship finally arrived at the port on the eastern coast of the Western continent. Joseph of Arimathea took the greatest contingent of men and equipment and went into the continent to the various mines that had been explored to further develop them and begin shipments of ore to the coast. He went as far as the great river that divided the east from the west and northward to the great lakes. He arranged shipments from the north to be taken to the St. Lawrence Seaway and the shipments of the southeast to be taken to the coast. A large fleet of new ships had been under construction to take the ore to Rome. Within the year many of these ships would arrive at the two ports to begin the transporting of ore. Joseph of Arimathea would oversee all aspects of this operation during the next five to ten years. Then his work would be done and he could go on to other things.

On the voyage over, Jesus had told Uncle Joe of his need to go to various places where he had been told in dreams and visions to meet with people whose lineage went back to ancient Israel. He was asked if he could do this while completing other tasks that were needed to be done. Jesus replied that would work out just fine as some of the people he needed to see were in the middle of the northern continent while others were in the lower part and finally some were in the southern continent. Uncle Joe asked him how he knew there was a southern continent as it was not on any world map he knew of. Jesus answered, "Somehow, I remember that is how I made it to begin with."

Jesus was given a small contingent of men, including Ahmed, to explore other areas of the continent. The journey would last a year

or two and would take them into the interior of the great western continent. They traveled beyond the great river and across the plains. Finally, they came to a great mountain range and upon climbing a tall peak saw that mountains reached as far as they could see to the north and to the south.

During the journey, Jesus spent time with many different tribes whose skin and facial features ranged from light to dark skinned Indians and those with rounded faces to those with high cheekbones. He learned that some who lived to the South of the continent had legends that they had come from lands beyond the great oceans to the East a thousand years before. Then there were tribes to the North that believed that they had come from across a great ocean to the West. Jesus taught them that he was from the sky above. He told them that before becoming a man just like them that he had been the Creator and had made the land, the waters, the wind, and life itself for all the animals and peoples on earth. He explained that after he would be sacrificed for the sins of all mankind, he would go to be with the heavenly Father, while the Great Holy Spirit would abide in this world to help and guide those who believed in him. A few believed, but most just shook their heads in wonder at his words.

When Jesus returned to the Southeastern port, he found a message from his uncle that he would be gone for several more years. Joseph had also instructed the captain of the ship to take Jesus wherever he wanted to go and to support him in any endeavor he pursued. Jesus sketched out a map of the eastern coast of the northern continent that continued to the southern continent. The captain scratched his head as he looked over the map of the route Jesus wanted to take. He said he had never seen such a map before. But he would do as Jesus directed according to Joseph's orders.

His first request was for the captain along with thirty men to sail the ship southward down the eastern coast. They anchored in numerous coves where they restocked ship's provisions while Jesus went ashore with a small contingency of men and journeyed into lands that one day would be called Mexico and Central America. He met with various native peoples there. Some were called Mayans and others Aztecs. In their language, they called him Quetzalcoatl. He spoke to them in their own language and told them that he had been born of a virgin and his father was the Yahweh of heaven above. He taught them the laws of Yahweh and about repentance and living in the way of Yahweh. He went to many villages and healed the sick that were brought to him. When it came time for him to leave, he told them that he had to return to his homeland to the East and that after he returned there, he would be killed. The people cried and tried to get him to stay with them and not return. He told them his death was the sacrifice that must be paid for the sins of all mankind so they could be reconciled to Yahweh above.<sup>44</sup>

Further down the coast, Jesus found a place that he determined would be the narrowest point where they could travel between the two great oceans. They anchored the ship and a contingent of men accompanied Jesus and Ahmed across the northern portion of what he called the southern continent of the western hemisphere. They reached the coast of what would eventually be called the Pacific Ocean. Then they went southward passing through land that would be called Ecuador and Peru. In these areas Jesus met with groups of people called the Incas. Like some who lived with the Aztecs and the Mayans, a few of the Incas were descendants of Israelites who had sailed the oceans during the reigns of King David and King Solomon. The Incas called Jesus, Viracocha in their language. Some recognized Jesus as a deity or Elohim [God] after he performed

miracles of healing the sick. Still, only a few truly accepted his message and had faith in him as the Christ promised from Yahweh. **45**



## Chapter 37

### **Jesus has a vision of future perverting the Truth**

As Jesus completed his journeys in the southern, central, and northern continents in the western hemisphere, he was satisfied that he had done what Yahweh wanted him to do. They retraced their route to where they had left their ship grateful that it was still anchored where they left it on the Eastern coast. On the voyage back northward to the southeastern port that Uncle Joseph had established, he had a vision.

In the vision, he saw the natives he had visited to the south perverting what he had taught them. He could see Satan influencing them to begin practicing the most evil and vile thing he could think of. He had told them that he would offer his life for all mankind. Satan twisted this and got them to eventually practice human sacrifices. The names of Quetzalcoatl and Viracocha that they had called him would be corrupted by using these names for their new pagan gods to whom they would perform this hideous and gruesome offering.

Tears filled Jesus' eyes as he woke and realized how things that were good could be used for such wrong purposes by evil men. He cursed Satan and vowed that one day he would settle the score with that evil monster. He had sought the house of Israel from one end of the world to the other. Except for a very few, most of the dispersed descendants of the house of Israel would have to await his return over two thousand years from that time when he would return from heaven as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Jesus tried to understand how it was possible that people would purposely change what he had told them. Why could they not see

that they were not doing what he told them to do? In his visits with these people he made sure that he was explicit in what he said. He had even asked them to tell him what they had heard him say. While there, their answers were right on track. Yet, in a very short time after he left, all this would begin to change.

Then Jesus had another vision that went not too distantly but a very few years into the future. He saw himself directly teaching many Jews and then selecting twelve men to witness his life, death, and resurrection and to pass on to others all that he taught them after he was gone from this earth. He saw one of the twelve men replaced and then after he was gone another man whose name became Paul came on the scene whom he directly contacted to become his apostle and prophet and be very instrumental in writing down not just what Jesus told the twelve but the intent of what Jesus wanted people to know. These men and a few others including his brother James would write what he wanted to tell the whole world. He would replace the Old Covenant between Yahweh and Israel with a New Covenant between Yahweh and all nations of men. Then he saw that as the years passed and the writers of the New Covenant died, others came on the scene that twisted what was written to things not intended.**46**

To his horror he saw a great false church rise up in Rome and later many other false churches like daughters presenting the pagan Babylonian Mysteries that was deceptively mixed with godly sounding names and phrases of the Word of Yahweh and these half-truths became the teachings of Yahweh for most of the people of the world who thought they were obeying the Holy Scriptures. How could people be so deceived? The answer was the same as it was for the Incas, Aztecs, and Mayans. Satan was the great deceiver

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corrupting the Truth with error. Over and over mankind would be tested and more often than not, he would fail. It was easier for mankind to believe a lie than the truth. Yet, there would be a remnant, a few who would reject Satan and his lies mixed with truth. These would remain faithful to him and Almighty Yahweh. Then Jesus saw a vision of him meeting with a man before the Great Tribulation that would take place before his second coming. he made this man his apostle and prophet like Paul. He was commissioned to write and speak of truths in the New Covenant that had been replaced by traditions of men in the teachings of most churches. Many would come to a true faith in the Christ and begin to follow the way of righteous living due to this man's work.

After returning to port, Jesus decided to journey to where his uncle was busy at work. Along the way, he spent time with the various Indian tribes his uncle had visited. He listened to their tales of previous visitors to this continent from the land of Israel and Carthage. He told them of the prophecies of the coming Christ which some remembered were passed down by their ancestors. During his stay at the various tribal towns, he performed miracles of healing the sick, giving sight to the blind, and causing the lame to walk again. He preached the Word of Yahweh and proclaimed that he was the Christ, the same Christ their forefathers had told them about in their legends. Several accepted his teachings and professed their faith in him as the Son of Yahweh. He baptized them in streams of water. He felt greatly encouraged by the response, which offset what he had experienced among the Aztec and Mayan people who had mixed with those from Israel many centuries before in the narrowed central land between the north and southern continent. Those of the Incas who were also mixed with Israelite blood who lived at the top of the southern continent were a disappointment as well. He had tried to reach his people scattered across the ends of the world and done all

he could. Their time would come much later when he finished this life and then returned a second time.

## Chapter 38

### **Jesus Returns to Judea to Begin His Ministry**

Jesus found Uncle Joe in a settlement on the south shore of a massive lake near modern day Chicago. They talked about Jesus' journey to the South and how the development of the mines was going. For another year, Jesus remained with Uncle Joe at the settlement except for a six-month trip to the other great lakes and the people who had settled near them. The years had passed quickly. A few months, after he turned twenty-nine, he woke up one night just before the break of day. He sat up in the darkness and mentally calculated the time it would take to journey back to the port and then for the voyage home. He dressed as the morning sun sent its rays above the horizon to begin a new day. Then he went to the room of his Uncle Joseph and knocked on the door. It quickly opened and there stood Joseph fully dressed.

"It is time," Jesus said.

"I know," Joseph, answered.

Joseph had finished his final tasks a few days before. He had marveled that he had accomplished so much cutting a full year off his initial estimate of the time it would take. He had been ready to return to port and then sail for home. He had not said anything to Jesus for he wanted him to have all the time he needed to finish the work he was doing. He was not surprised by Jesus' knock on his door for he had also been woken up after having a dream of sailing for home.

On this journey, they would make the usual stops for supplies and dropping off and taking on cargo for the next port. Nevertheless, there would be few delays other than at the ports in the Isle of Briton and at Rome. Jesus was very restless during the nights they were at

port in the Isle. The delay at Rome was even more difficult for him to remain patient.

It was time to seek those who had remained in the 'Promise Land'. Would he find some who would hear the voice of Yahweh? During the last night before sailing, he dreamed of hearing a voice crying in the wilderness of Judea. It came from a rugged man dressed in camel's hair and who ate locusts and the honey of wild bees. Jesus could hear his voice calling out over and over in his dreams:

*"I am 'The voice of one crying in the wilderness:  
Make straight the way of the Lord'."*

Jesus knew the man's face and voice. More than ever, he felt an urgent need to return home. He needed to see this man. With favorable winds and no problems with the ship, they would make port in Joppa and he would be able to journey to Nazareth and reach his family home by his thirtieth birthday. Jesus kept busy, trimming the sails to keep the ship moving at its best speed. He also spent a great deal of time in his cabin on his knees praying to the Father for strength, power, and resolve to complete one of the most important reason he was born.

Their ship finally docked in Joppa. He knew that he would see very little of Uncle Joseph during the next few years. In his farewell to Ahmed he saw the first tears roll down his cheeks he had seen in all the years he was with Ahmed. They hugged each other as brothers as Ahmed assured him that his faith in him and his teachings would guide the rest of his life. Then with a heavy heart Jesus bid Uncle Joseph farewell as he prepared to leave for Nazareth. He could tell that Uncle Joseph suffered a terrible sadness in his heart as they parted. He had been like a father to him and in the next few years, it was extremely unlikely that they would be able to see each other again in this world.

After arriving in Nazareth, Jesus spent a few days with his family just plain relaxing. Things were about to change. His mind gradually focused on what his future would be like and what he still needed to do.

“Have you heard from John recently? Do you know where he is?” Jesus asked his mother, Mary one morning after the family finished breakfast and only his mother and he remained at the table.

“He is baptizing people in the Jordan River,” Mary answered. “I have heard there is often a large crowd that goes to hear him preach about repentance. Then there are many who are baptized in the river.”

Jesus smiled as he visualized his cousin standing in the water as repentant Israelites waded forth to him to be baptized.

“It is time for me to see him,”<sup>47</sup> Jesus said, “I need him to do something for me.”

.....

**The End of *The Early Years of the Christ*. The rest of his life can be found in the gospel accounts of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John in the New Testament of the Holy Bible**

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## **References for *The Early Years of the Christ*.**

### **1.** Letter ‘J’ first use in 1619.

My source for the following:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J>

According to Watt (Bibliotheca Britannica), Louis Elzevir, who printed at Leyden 1595-1616, is generally credited with making the modern distinction of u and v, i and j, “which was shortly after followed by the introduction of U and J among the capitals by Lazarus Zetzner of Strasburg in 1619”. In England, individual attempts to differentiate i and j were made already in the 16th century, as by Richard Day, who printed books in London after 1578, and George Bishop, who printed the translation of La Primaudaye’s French Academie in 1586, with i, j, u, v, differentiated as in modern use, but had no capital J or U.

During the decade which followed 1625, J, j, , appear to have been gradually added to all fonts of type, and the present usage of restricting I i to the vowel, J j to the consonant appears to have been generally established soon after 1630. But though the differentiation of I and J, in form and value, was thus completed before 1640, the feeling that they were, notwithstanding, merely forms of the same letter continued for many generations;

First Biblical use of letter ‘J’ not in KJV 1611/

My source for the following is:

<https://www1.cbn.com/churchandministry/underprized-william-tyndale-and-the-english-bible>

Truth is, each of the passages above had their beginning not with the King James translators, but in the translation of William Tyndale some eighty-five years earlier, at a time when an English translation of the Bible was not only against the law in England, it was punishable by death.

While it certainly deserves the honors it has received, the (1611) King James Bible gets the applause that rightfully belongs to William Tyndale (1494-1536). 90% or more of the King James New Testament is Tyndale's translation, and most often word for word.

**2.** So, where did the name Jesus come from? Christianity has followed the KJV and other versions of the Bible which has the name Jesus for the Christ, the Son of God. While we can see proof that the Christ was never actually named 'Jesus', He was a Hebrew not a Greek; The transliteration from Hebrew to Greek to English provides a connection that whether we call our Savior and Christ, Jesus or Yeshua or even other Hebrew names like Yahshua; we are talking about the same person.

My source for the following is: <https://www.quora.com/If-the-letter-J-wasnt-invented-until-1600-how-did-Jesus-get-his-name-2013-years-ago>

Robert Pollock, I am a retired Ordained Minister and religion teacher of 4 decades. Updated Jan 31.

Most English Bibles use the name Jesus when translating the Greek name used in the New Testament Scriptures for the Messiah. But there is a considerable problem with using this name to call upon and refer to the Messiah of the Bible.

At the heart of the problem with using the name Jesus as a reference to the Messiah is that the name Jesus wasn't and isn't his real name. The historical Nazarene was a Hebrew. He was

Jewish, born of Jewish parents. He and his parents and all Israel during those times spoke Hebrew as their primary language. Therefore, he was given a Hebrew name.

But the name Jesus is not a Hebrew name. There is no name even close to sounding like Jesus in Hebrew. Therefore, it is easy to see that the name Jesus is not derived from the Hebrew language. In fact, it is a name derived from the Greek language.

The name Jesus has come to us in this manner. The Hebrew name given at birth to the Messiah was [vwhy (transliterated YHUSHA). The reason we know this is that the Messiah's name as given in the Greek New Testament is the same name as Joshua son of Nun, as indicated by the usage of this same Greek name in Hebrews 4:8. The name for Joshua, when rendered into the Septuagint Greek text is VIhsou/j, the same name in the Greek New Testament which is rendered Jesus by our English Bibles.

**3. In order to further clarify the Messiah's own personal name as Yeshua, I have copied the following text from this source:**

**[http://www.yashanet.com/library/yeshua\\_or\\_Yahshua.htm](http://www.yashanet.com/library/yeshua_or_Yahshua.htm)**

### **The Messiah's Hebrew Name:**

#### **"Yeshua" Or "Yahshua"?**

*by Dr. Daniel Botkin*

Dr. Daniel Botkin explains the Hebrew linguistics of the names "Yeshua" and "Yahshua" and how "Yahshua" is a mis transliteration by Sacred Name advocates to fit an erroneous

interpretation of John 5:43 and how "Yeshua" is far more accurate. He also clearly establishes the fact that the English name "Jesus" has absolutely no pagan connection and is simply a derivation of "Yesous," the Greek transliteration of "Yeshua." Most important, Dr. Botkin addresses that slander and criticism surrounding the name controversy in entirely non-Scriptural and not glorifying to the Holy One of Israel.

The Messiah's Hebrew name is usually transliterated as either *Yeshua* or *Yahshua*. Under normal circumstances I would not bother to write an article about something as trivial as the difference between the vowel sounds "e" and "ah." There is a need to address the subject, though, because some people who use the *Yahshua* form say untrue things about those who use the *Yeshua* form. The opponents of the *Yeshua* form claim that this pronunciation is the result of a Jewish conspiracy to hide the Savior's true name. Those who call the Messiah *Yeshua* are accused of perpetuating a Jewish conspiracy and "denying His name" or "degrading Him" by their use of the *Yeshua* form. If you have never read or heard these outlandish accusations, you probably will eventually. From time to time I receive personal letters to this effect.

The proponents of the *Yahshua* form claim that the Messiah's name was the same as Joshua's, written [vwwhy or [wvwhy (Strong's #3091). The only problem is that neither of these Hebrew spellings of Joshua's name can possibly be pronounced "Yahshua." The third letter in Joshua's name (reading from right to left) is the letter *vav* (w) and a *vav* cannot be silent. The letter *vav* must be pronounced as either a "v" or an "o" or an "u." (In the case of *Joshua*, it takes an "o" sound, giving us "Ye-ho-SHU-a." Strong's confirms this pronunciation.) For a name to be pronounced "Yahshua," it would have to be spelled [wv--hy, and no such name exists

anywhere in the Hebrew Bible. You don't have to just take my word for it, though. Dr. Danny Ben-Gigi says of the *Yahshua* form that "there is no such name in Hebrew" and that "people invented it to fit their theology."<sup>[1]</sup> Dr. Ben-Gigi is an Israeli and the former head of Hebrew programs at Arizona State University. He is the author of the book *First Steps in Hebrew Prayers*, and he designed and produced the "Living Israeli Hebrew" language-learning course. Dr. David Bivin, a Christian, says that the *Yahshua* form "is rooted in a misunderstanding."<sup>[2]</sup> Dr. Bivin is a renowned Hebrew scholar and teacher and author of *Fluent Biblical Hebrew*.

I do not know of a single individual that knows Hebrew well enough to actually read it and understand it and converse in it who uses the *Yahshua* form.

Please do not misunderstand. A person does not need to know Hebrew and Greek linguistics in order to be spiritual. However, if a person is going to take it upon himself to instruct others about subjects of a linguistic and Hebraic nature, he should know the Hebrew language and he should know some basics about linguistics. This is especially true if he is going to use his Hebrew-based linguistic teachings to accuse his brethren of being part of a "Jewish conspiracy" to "deny the true name of the Messiah."

To people who actually know Hebrew – people like Dr. Ben-Gigi, Dr. Bivin, and others – it is very obvious that those who insist on the *Yahshua* form know very little about the Hebrew language. The only Hebrew that most of these self-appointed scholars know is what they can learn from a Strong's Concordance.<sup>[3]</sup> Strong's is a great study tool and a fine place to start, but it is not a means by which a person can learn the Hebrew language.

The English form *Jesus* is derived from the New Testament Greek name *Ihsouß*, pronounced "Yesous." According to Strong's, *Yesous* (Strong's #2424) is "of Hebrew origin" and can be traced back to Joshua's Hebrew name, *Yehoshua* (#3091, [wvwhy]). But how do we get the Greek *Yesous* from the Hebrew *Yehoshua*? Someone armed with nothing more than a Strong's Concordance may have difficulty answering that question. Someone who reads the Bible in Hebrew, though, knows that the name *Joshua* sometimes appears in its shortened form, *Yeshua* ([wvy]) in Neh. 8:17 it is apparent even in English: "Jeshua the son of Nun." (The letter *J* was pronounced like a *Y* in Old English.) Strong does not tell the reader that the Greek *Yesous* is actually transliterated from this shortened Hebrew form, *Yeshua*, and not directly from the longer form *Yehoshua*. The process from "Yehoshua" to "Jesus" looks like this:

Hebrew *Yehoshua* à Hebrew *Yeshua*

Hebrew *Yeshua* à Greek *Yesous*

Greek *Yesous* à English *Jesus*

There is no "sh" sound in Greek, which accounts for the middle "s" sound in *Yesous*. The "s" at the end of the Greek name is a grammatical necessity, to make the word declinable.

**4.** Pg. continuing from the source:

[http://www.yashanet.com/library/yeshua\\_or\\_Yahshua.htm](http://www.yashanet.com/library/yeshua_or_Yahshua.htm)

In Neh. 8:17, Joshua's name is 100% identical to the name which today's Messianic Jews use for the Messiah, *Yeshua* ([wvy]). Strong's confirms this pronunciation, and tells us that there were ten Israelites in the Bible who bore



this name (#3442). Therefore the shortening of *Yehoshua* to *Yeshua* predates the Christian era by at least 500 years, and cannot be the result of a Jewish conspiracy to hide the Savior's true name.[4] To claim that the shortened form *Yeshua* is the result of a Jewish conspiracy is to ignore the facts of history and the facts of the Hebrew Scriptures. The form *Yeshua* existed for several hundred years before the Messiah was even born. Even in the pre-Christian Septuagint, we see the Greek form *IHSOUS* (*Yesous*) in the title of the Book of Joshua. (This is also proof that *Yesous* has no connection to the pagan god Zeus.)

So, where did the transliteration *Yahshua* come from? This form of the name can be traced back to the beginnings of the Sacred Name movement, a movement that grew out of the Church of God, 7th Day, in the late 1930s. I have in my files an article entitled, "A Brief History of the Name Movement in America" by L.D. Snow, a Sacred Name believer.[5] According to this article, "John Briggs and Paul Penn were the FIRST to pronounce and use the name *Yahshua*" (emphasis Snow's). This was in 1936 and in 1937, the article states. No information is given about how Briggs and Penn came up with this (mis)translation.

Later Sacred Name literature appeals to the Messiah's statement in John 5:43 as "proof" of the *Yahshua* form: "I am come in My Father's name," He said. In the minds of Sacred Name believers, this means that "*Yah*," a shortened form of *Yahweh*, must appear in the name of the Son. However, the Messiah did *not* say "My name contains My Father's name" or "My Father's name must appear inside My name" or any such statement. He said absolutely nothing here about His own name. The only "name" mentioned here was the Father's name. He said, "I am come in My Father's name," which

simply means that He was coming by His Father's authority, on His Father's behalf. If we take Yeshua's statement "I am come in My Father's name" to mean that His own name must contain the Father's name, then we ourselves cannot do anything "in the Father's name" unless our own personal name happens to contain the syllable "*Yah*." The folly of this interpretation is also evident if the same line of reasoning is applied to the rest of Yeshua's statement: "...if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive." If the logic of Sacred Name believers is applied to this half of the verse, it would be saying "a person's name must contain his own name," which is meaningless. If, on the other hand, "in his own name" means "by his own authority," then the statement makes sense.

Why is the *Yahshua* form used by no one but Sacred Name believers and people who have been influenced by Sacred Name believers? Probably because no such name exists in the Hebrew Bible and, to my knowledge, no such name exists in any extra-Biblical Hebrew literature. It appears that Dr. Ben-Gigi is correct when he says that people invented the name *Yahshua* to fit their theology.

I have read a lot of literature from writers who seek to expose the "errors" of those who refer to the Messiah as *Yeshua*. The only thing these writers actually expose is their lack of knowledge. I could give several examples of statements which are absolutely ridiculous. I do not have the space in this publication to give all the examples I have in my files, and I do not wish to embarrass sincere people for their honest but misguided efforts. There are some examples, though, that grossly misrepresent the facts, and some of these examples need to be exposed.



In one popular booklet published by a well-known Sacred Name organization, the anonymous author makes this statement: "Most reference works agree with *Kittel's Theological Dictionary of the NT* statement on page 284, which states that the name Yahoshua was shortened after the exile to the short form *Yahshua*." This statement makes it sound like Kittel uses the forms *Yahoshua* and *Yahshua*. I went to the library and looked at this page in Kittel's. The words *Yahoshua* and *Yahshua* do not appear even one time on this page. This can be verified by going to a library and looking up this page. (It's in Volume III.) If your library does not have Kittel's, I can send a photocopy of this page to any skeptics.

This same Sacred Name organization which misrepresents Kittel's also misrepresented a Jewish author. In a magazine article written by this organization's main leader, a lengthy segment is quoted from a book published by KTAV, a Jewish publishing house. When copying this quotation for his magazine article, this Sacred Name author freely used *Yahshua*, making it appear that the Jewish author used that transliteration in his book. I got the book from the library, though, and discovered that "Yahshua" did not appear in the book. I wrote to this Sacred Name leader asking for an explanation. I told him that unless he had some other explanation, I could conclude one of three things: either he deliberately misrepresented the facts, or he did it accidentally, or the book I got from the library was a different version from his, in which case I would owe him an apology. My letter was sent September 1, 1997, and I am still waiting for a reply. I will not embarrass this man by mentioning his name or the name of his ministry. It is not my intention to embarrass anyone.

I am not writing this article to persuade people to quit saying "Yahshua." If people want to continue using a mis transliteration that was erroneously contrived by early Sacred Name pioneers who didn't know Hebrew, it really doesn't matter to me. I don't (know) that the substitution of an "ah" sound for an "e" sound matters much to the Lord, either. What does matter, though, is the spreading of false accusations against Messianic Jews and others who called the Messiah "Yeshua."

Paul warned Timothy about "doting about questions and strife's of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmising [suspicions]" (1 Tim. 6:4). Unfortunately, this is an accurate description of what goes on among many people in the Sacred Name movement. Personally, I would rather fellowship with non-contentious people who call the Messiah "Jesus" than with contentious people who insist that everyone call Him "Yahshua."

## NOTES

[1] *Love Song to the Messiah* newsletter, March 1999, p. 1.

[2] "The Fallacy of Sacred Name Bibles," *Jerusalem Perspective* Nov.-Dec. 1991, p. 12.

[3] These teachers very heavily rely on Strong's Concordance, yet when Strong proves them wrong, as he does with the pronunciation of *Yehoshua*, they insist that Strong's rendering is erroneous! I have a Sacred Name publication which actually claims that Strong wrote down incorrect pronunciations because "his understanding of the Name was

lacking." Anyone who wants to disprove this ludicrous assertion can simply look at Joshua's name in a Hebrew Bible and see that Strong used the very same vowel marks that are used in the Bible.

[4] There is some debate over whether or not the Jews' final shortening of Jesus' name to *Yeshu* (wvy) was a deliberate attempt to avoid acknowledging Yeshua of Nazareth as Savior.

[5] This article first appeared in a publication called *The Elijah Messenger* in May-June 1966, and was reprinted in 1975 in *World Today Analyzed*, a publication of the Assembly of Yahvah in Tahlequah, OK.

### 5. Acts 11:26 (NKJV)

*26 And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And **the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.***

### 6. Source: Hebrew/Aramaic Origin of the Brit Chadash (sn- New Testament)

Below is evidence which clearly points towards the Brit Chadash (sn- New Testament) **being originally written in Hebrew and not Greek**. Churchianity (Christianity) itself is tainted with Greek thinking, Hellenized creeds, and unscriptural practices derived from Greco-Roman infusions through a Greek-translated Brit Chadash (sn- New Testament). Scholarship is increasingly validating the case for a Hebrew original Brit Chadash (sn- New Testament).

The inquiring Scriptures student soon realizes that the Brit Chadash (sn- New Testament) is undeniably Hebrew in grammar, idiom, and thinking. This opens up a whole new understanding of the essence of truth for the Brit Chadash (sn- New Testament) believer. If the Brit Chadash (sn- New Testament) is rooted in the Hebrew Language, then its teachings also derive from the Hebrew culture and are embedded in the Hebrew - and not pagan Greek - view of truth. Those who would object to this reality must be asked the question, does arguing for a Greek Brit Chadash (sn- New Testament) bring one closer to the truth, or take one further from it, knowing that the Old Testament is a thoroughly Hebrew work? Is the Brit Chadash (sn- New Testament) a complete replacement of Old Testament teachings, with entirely new truth flavored with Hellenistic (Greek) thought, practice, and understanding? Not according to the Apostle Shaul (sn- Paul). He wrote that the Brit Chadash (sn- New Testament) is built on the foundation of the Old Testament prophets as well as the apostles, Ephesians 2:20. [*Yeshua*] ha Mashiach (Messiah) the Messiah gave the directive to "*search the Scriptures*," Yahuchanon (sn- John) 5:39. The only "*scriptures*" existent at that time were those of the Old Testament. The Brit Chadash (sn- New Testament) writings were not yet finished and compiled. In His parable of Lazarus, [Yeshua] ha Mashiach (Messiah) again advised the unknowing to listen to "*(sn- Moshah) and the prophets*," meaning the Old Testament, Lukah (sn- Luke) 16:29. It was these same Old Testament Scriptures that the "*noble Bereans*" used to establish truth in Acts 17:11, and the very ones Shaul (sn- Paul) told Timothy would make one perfect, 2 Timothy 3:16-17. Aside from approaching truth from the right scriptural foundation, there is another important reason for coming to grips with the original language of the Brit Chadash (sn- New Testament). One of the arguments advanced against the verity of the set-apart (sn- sacred) Names is that the Names would appear as "God" (*Theos*) and "Jesus" in the Brit Chadash (sn- New Testament)

Greek text. The logic goes, if such titles and names are in the "original" texts, then who are we to change them to something else? The issue though is that these names weren't in the "original texts! Apart from this argument's erroneous premise ("God" is not the same word as the Greek *Theos*: "Jesus" is only partly a Greek term), we must ask, is it legitimate to change someone's name simply because you are writing about him in some other language? Names are transliterated, not translated. Names don't change pronunciation. If a book about the president of the United States were written in or translated into Russian, would the author or translators look for a Russian equivalent name for [Donald Trump]?" Of course not. His name would still appear as [Donald Trump]. By the same token, the Father and Son's Name are the same in every language. Therefore, we must call on them by their name revealed through the Hebrew tongue. There is no more a Russian equivalent name for [Donald Trump] than there is a Greek or English equivalent of the Hebrew "[YAHWEH]" and "[YESHUA] ha Mashiach." "God", "Lord", and "Jesus" are not equivalents, they are **REPLACEMENTS**.

### **Hebrew Words Out of Place?**

A peculiar discrepancy within the Brit Chadash (sn- New Testament) is this: if the Brit Chadash (sn- New Testament) were originally composed in Greek, why does it contain many untranslated Hebrew words? Why did the writers go to all the trouble of preserving Hebrew terms in their Greek writings? The only valid explanation is that the Greek language had no equivalent words for these uniquely Hebrew terms taken from an original Hebrew text and translated into Greek. These Hebrew survivals attest to a Hebrew original - and a Greek (and English) translation that brought them across unchanged from the Hebrew. The following HEBREW words are included in the King James Brit Chadash (sn- New Testament), as taken from the Greek translation



(some are Aramaic). **Abba** ("*dearest father*"); **Messiah** ("*Anointed one*"); **Rabbi** ("*my teacher*"); **hosanna** ("*Save! We beseech*"); **Amen** (suggests trust, faithfulness); **talitha cumi** ("*maid arise*"); **ephphatha** ("*be opened*"); **corban** ("*a dedicated gift*"); **Sabbath** ("*repose*", "*desist*" from exertion); **Satan** ("*adversary*"); **mammon** ("*riches*"); **raca** ("*to spit in one's face*"); **cummin** (herb); **Maranatha** ("*Master, I pray you overthrow*"); **Passover** ("*pass over*"); **Emmanuel** (title meaning "*El with us*"); **Eli lama Sabachthani** ("*my El, why have you forsaken me?*") Even more compelling evidence for a Brit Chadash (sn- New Testament) originally composed in Hebrew is found in the clear Hebrew word order extant in the Brit Chadash (sn- New Testament). Many sentences contain the verb-noun reversal common to Hebrew and Semitic languages. Scholars also have long recognized that the grammar of the Brit Chadash (sn- New Testament) does not befit good Greek but does reflect excellent Hebrew grammar. In addition, many Hebraic idioms and expressions are scattered throughout the Brit Chadash (sn- New Testament). Had the original been composed in Greek, these sayings would have been put into Greek form and expression. For example, what did [YESHUA] ha Mashiach (Messiah) and others mean by statements that don't make good sense in Greek (Or English) but are powerful in the Hebrew? Such expressions include: "*If your eye is evil*" (Matt. 6:23); "*let the dead bury the dead*" (Matt. 8:22); "*for if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry*" (Lukah (sn- Luke) 23:31), and "*thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head*" Shaul (sn- Paul) in Rom. 12:20). Numerous examples of Semitic poetry and reverse couplets (chiasmus) are dead giveaways to the original Hebrew of these books. Hebrew is also distinct for its colorful descriptions of simple, common acts. For example, a beautiful expression in classical Hebrew is found in Lukah (sn- Luke) 16:23: "...*he lift up his eyes...and saw*..." Other sayings peculiar to Hebrew and found in the Evangels include: "*Lay these sayings in your years*," "*Cast out*

*your name as evil," "He set his face to go," and "The appearance of his countenance was altered."* Whole sentences or paragraphs in the Brit Chadash (sn- New Testament) can be retranslated word for word back into the Hebrew. Lukah (sn- Luke) 10:5-6 is just one example: *"And into whatsoever house you enter, first say, Peace be to this house. And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it: if not, it shall turn to you again."* This passage is a synthesis of vivid Hebrew idioms unknown in the Greek.

### **Greek Unpopular in Yahshrael (sn- Israel, Judea)**

Many linguists and historians now attest that the Evangels, the Acts, and the Book of Revelation were composed in Hebrew (see listing of these scholars included herein). Early "church fathers" validate that the Book of Matthyahu (sn- Matthew) was originally written in Hebrew (see Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* 3:39; Irenaeus' *Against Heresies* 3:1; Epiphanius' *Panarion* 20:9:4; Jerome's *Lives of Illustrious Men* 3 and *De Vir.* 3:36). Hebrew was the language of Yahudah (sn- Judah) and Galilee in the first century. Its sister language, Aramaic, remained the secondary tongue and the language of commerce. Yahudite (sn-Jew) in this area were not Greek-speaking. Their revulsion to the Greeks and the Greek language derives from the fact that the Maccabees had just defeated the Greeks and driven them and their pagan defilement from the Temple and Palestine. The eminent first century Yahudite (sn-Jew) historian, priest, and scholar Josephus admitted that he could not speak Greek fluently and that the Yahudite (sn-Jew) frowned on any Yahudite (sn-Jew) who did.

### **A Hebrew Writing to Hebrews**

The common perception is that Shaul (sn- Paul) was a Hellenist Yahudite (sn-Jew) from Tarsus who wrote his letters to Greek-

speaking assemblies in Asia Minor, Rome and Greece. Shaul (sn-Paul) was first and foremost a Pharisee - a Yahudite (sn-Jew) sect opposed to Hellenization (Greek way of life). He was of the tribe of Benyahmiyn (sn-Benjamin) and a "*Hebrew of Hebrews*," Philippians 3:5. A note in the NIV Study Bible says the expression "*Hebrew of Hebrews*" means "in language, attitudes and life-style." Shaul (sn-Paul) was educated at the feet of Gamaliel, a great doctor of Hebrew law, Acts 22:3. Although he was born in Tarsus (a city speaking mainly Aramaic), Shaul (sn-Paul) grew up in Yahrushaliym (Jerusalem), the center of Pharisaic Judaism, Acts 22:3. The epistles Shaul (sn-Paul) wrote were to various assemblies of the Dispersion. Each assembly was composed of a nucleus group of Yahudite (sn-Jew) and supplementary collections of gentiles (read about the Thessalonians Assembly, Acts 17:1-4, as well as the Corinthians, 1 Cor. 10:1-2). The converted Yahudite (sn-Jew) in these assemblies would receive Shaul (sn-Paul's) letters and then teach the gentiles among them. It wasn't the gentiles who were converting Yahudite (sn-Jew) to a Grecian-Roman faith with a Greek Savior and doctrines of mystery worship! Typically, Shaul (sn-Paul) went first to the synagogue when he traveled to contact these and other assemblies (Acts 13:14; 14:1; 17:1; 17:10, 18:4, 19:8). The language of the second Temple and synagogues at this time was Hebrew and Aramaic, not Greek. His letters in Hebrew to these Yahudite (sn-Jew) and gentiles of the various assemblies would reflect his mission to take the Good News to "*the Yahudite (sn-Jew) first and then to the Greek*," Romans 1:16. As an example, Shaul (sn-Paul) specifically addressed Yahudite (sn-Jew) of the Corinthian assembly: "*Moreover, brethren, I would not that you should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto (sn-Moshah) in the cloud and in the sea*" (1 Cor. 10:1-2).



## **Truth from Greek or Hebrew?**

Understanding basic truth is to know that [YAHWEH] chose the Hebrew peoples with whom to make a Covenant and through whom to bring the truth. How much of a gentile should the True Worshiper be who is bathing in Scriptures first delivered to Hebrew patriarchs, Hebrew prophets, and Hebrew apostles and lived by a Savior from the human lineage of King Du'ud (sn- David)? Shaul (sn- Paul) was no champion of the gentile cause. He was the champion of a Hebrew Messiah and scriptures given in a Hebrew Old Testament. These were what he taught in his epistles. Note: *"But this I confess unto you, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the Eloah of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets"* (Acts 24:14). *"Law and prophets"* refers to the Old Testament Scriptures. Which culture, world-view, and mentality should prevail among True Worshipers today? A Greek-gentile heritage? Or the birthright of those grafted into the promised of Yahshrael (sn- Israel) established by the Heavenly Father [YAHWEH] Himself? Shaul (sn- Paul) wrote to the assembly at Rome, "Who are Yahshraelites (Israelites); to whom pertains the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of Eloah, and the promises" (Romans 9:4). If Christianity were honest with itself, it would openly acknowledge that it derives its faith from Hebrew and not Greco-Roman Scriptures. That its salvation comes from a Savior who came as a Hebrew not to establish a new religion but to build on what went before. [YESHUA] ha Mashiach (Messiah) and the Scriptures are Hebrew. If this one pivotal truth were taught today, real understanding of the Scriptures would break out everywhere, and the Scriptures would at last be revealed.

**Scholars Who Support a Hebrew Original Brit Chadash  
(sn- New Testament)**

Following is a listing of some linguistic and Biblical authorities who maintain or support a belief in a Hebrew origin of the Brit Chadash (sn- New Testament): ● Matthew Black, *An Aramaic Approach to the Gospels and Acts*, third edition, entirety. ● D. Bivin and R. B. Blizzard, *Understanding the Difficult Words of Jesus*, entirety. ● E. W. Bullinger, *The Companion Scriptures*, Appendix 95. ● Dr. F. C. Burkitt, *The Earliest Sources for the Life of Jesus*, pp. 25, 29. ● Prof. C. F. Burney, *The Aramaic Origin of the Fourth Gospel*, entirety. ● Epiphanius, *Panarion* 29:9:4 on Matthew. ● Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, III 24:6 and 39:18; V8:2; VI 25:4. ● Edward Gibbon, *History of Christianity*, two footnotes on p. 185. ● Dr. Frederick C. Grant, *Roman Hellenism and the Brit Chadash (sn- New Testament)*, p. 14. ● Dr. George Howard, *The Tetragram and the Brit Chadash (sn- New Testament) in Journal of Biblical Literature*, vol. 96/1 (1977), 63-83. Also, *Hebrew Gospel of Matthew*, entirety. ● Dr. George Lamsa, *The Holy Scriptures from Ancient Eastern Manuscripts*, Introduction, pp. IX-XII. ● Dr. Alfred F. Loisy, *The Birth of the Christian Religion and The Origin of the Brit Chadash (sn- New Testament)*, pp. 66, 68. ● Dr. Isaac Rabinowitz, *Ephphata...in Journal of Semitic Studies* vol. XVI (1971), pp. 151-156. ● Ernest Renan, *The Life of Jesus*, pp. 90, 92. ● Hugh J. Schonfield, *An Old Hebrew Text of St. Matthew's Gospel*, (1927) p. 7. ● Dr. Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, p. 275. ● R. B. Y. Scott, *The Original Language of the Apocalypse*, entirety. ● Prof. Charles C. Torrey, *Documents of the Primitive Church*, entirety. Also, *Our Translated Gospels*, entirety. ● Dr. James Scott Trimm, *The semitic Origin of the Brit Chadash (sn- New Testament)*, entirety. ● Max Wiener, *The Semitism of Acts* (1965), entirety. ● F. Zimmermann, *The Aramaic Origin of the Four Gospels*, entirety.

*The Early Years of the Christ*

I find this insert provides indisputable proof that the New Testament was originally written in Aramaic and Hebrew. I think perhaps one of the main things drawn from this is the personal names of Elohim that Christians should use might well be those of the Hebrew language rather than the erroneous Greek names the Catholic Church has tried to foster on Christianity. The Father's name is Yahweh, the same as it was in the Old Testament. The Son's name is Yeshua Christ or Messiah also the same as we find in the Old Testament. Some prefer to use the word Master in place of Lord we find in the New Testament. I prefer to use Lord. The Hebrew words Elohim or Eloah more clearly refer to our Father in heaven or our Savior than the word God unless one can be reasonably certain that the scripture is specifically referring to Yahweh or Yeshua.

However, contrary to the opinions of the writer of the above insert, I do not believe that the teachings of Yeshua and the writers of the New Testament are simply a continuation of the Old Testament. There is a distinct break between the narrative of the Old and New Testaments. With the advent of the Christ as the old saying goes, "this is a whole new ball game." Please note that the laws and practices of the Old Testament do not continue because Yeshua begins changing them. Even the Ten Commandments that were brought forward were changed as to how they were to be kept. This truth is established in the Scriptures that tell us that the Old Covenant (Old Testament laws) were '*obsolete*' and '*ready to vanish away*' making room for a New Covenant. To me this clearly sounds like a whole new and different set of laws, beliefs, and concepts. The fact remains that the Old Covenant was patched and rewritten so many times it could no longer be fixed or corrected so Yeshua decided to completely replace it from top to bottom. The New Covenant was a fresh new start that no longer bound Christians and Jews with laws, statutes, and ordinances no longer applicable as they were no longer

independently living in the Promise Land with only the Father, Yahweh as their ruler.

Hebrews 8:13 (NKJV)

*13In that He says, “A new covenant,” He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.*

There is no document written on earth that can compare with the Word of Elohim, the Bible. It is the inspired Words that Elohim wanted man to learn so he could understand who and what he is and who and what his Creator is. With that established, man can begin to learn of the Way of Elohim. This Way involves practices as much as beliefs.

*14But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, 15and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Yeshua Christ.*

*16All Scripture is given by inspiration of Elohim, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17that the man of Elohim may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:14 - 17 NKJV)*

**7.** Collins, Stephen M., *The “Lost” Ten Tribes of Israel – Found*, 1992, CPA Books, Boring, Oregon

**8.** Ibid. Pg. 194-196. In approximately 530 B.C., **King Cyrus (the Great) of Persia invaded the eastern Scythians who were located east of the Caspian Sea.** <sup>69</sup> The Scythian tribes which were attacked were the Massagetae and the Dahae, descendants of the Israelite tribes of Manasseh and either Dan or Ephraimites. **The Massagetae were then ruled by a queen named Tomyris.** It resulted in the death of King Cyrus in approximately 528 B.C. The Massagetae were living in peace when Cyrus launched a war of aggression. **Queen Tomyris sent a message to Cyrus when an invasion was imminent. “King of the Medes, cease to be so eager to do what you are doing...rule over your own people, and endure to look upon us governing ours.”** After some initial fighting, **Queen Tomyris offered Cyrus a second chance to cease hostilities and go back to his own land, but warned that “If you do not so, I swear by the sun, the lord of the Massagetae, that, for all your insatiability of blood, I will give you your fill of it.”**

The invading Persian army was virtually “wiped out”. Persia’s emperor Cyrus was not only killed, but had his corpse humiliated.

**9.** Ibid. Pg. 194. In approximately 512 B.C., with an army of 700,000 men, **King Darius of the Persians launched a massive military expedition against the Scythians in the Black Sea area.** The Scythians drew the Persians army ever deeper into their homelands while harassing the Persians. **Darius’ army passed through modern Turkey, crossed the Bosphorus on a bridge of ships, attacked the Scythians north of the Black Sea by marching through modern Bulgaria and Romania.** <sup>66</sup> The Persian supply lines were stretched and vulnerable. Then **the Scythians adopted a ‘scorched earth’ policy, ruining and burning the vegetation.** Finally, **the Scythians sent a herald to Darius with a mysterious gift of a bird, a mouse, a frog, and five arrows.** The Persians were

told to ascertain the meaning of the message themselves. They eventually determined it to be: **“If you do not become birds and fly away into the sky or become mice and burrow into the earth or become frogs and leap into the lakes, there will be no homecoming for you, for we will shoot you down with our arrows.”** <sup>68</sup> Remembering the fate of King Cyrus, the Persian army fled in haste abandoning the weak and wounded as they fled. Less than half the army returned to their homeland. The Black Sea Scythians retained their independence, without fighting a full-scale battle. **The Persians lost over half their army** and were never a powerful nation afterwards.

**10.** Ibid. Pg. 197. **Various Scythian nations joined in becoming the Parthian Empire that had totally defeated the Assyrian Empire, crushed two armies of the Persians, and at one time occupied territory from Central and Eastern Europe to Manchuria China.** <sup>80</sup> If it had not been their tendency to remain a peace-loving people; it is most likely they would have destroyed Rome and become a world ruling nation.

**11.** Ibid. Pg. 242. **The invading Romans met the Parthian defenders at the battle of Carrhae in 53 B.C. (near the modern border of Syria and Turkey). The Romans suffered one of the worst defeats in the history of the Roman Empire; half the 40,000-man army perished, a quarter fled, and 10,000 captured Romans were resettled east of the Caspian Sea, given wives, and later even served as Parthian soldiers.** <sup>44</sup>

**12.** Ibid. Pg. 243. **Parthia retaliated for Rome’s invasion by attacking Rome’s territory in 40 B.C. The Parthian attack was so successful that they conquered Syria, Palestine, and Asia**



**Minor.** Emboldened by Parthian successes, **the Jews revolted against Rome and a Jewish prince, Antigonos, ruled Palestine as a satrap of the Parthians until 37 B.C.** 47 The Romans counterattacked, recovered their lost territories and reestablished the Euphrates River as the border between the two empires.

**13.** Ibid. Pg. 244. The next Parthian king, Phraates IV, was a moral wretch who killed his brothers, his father (King Orodes, who had abdicated in his son's favor), and even some of the Megistanes. The chaos within Parthia invited another Roman invasion. The invasion was led by the famous Mark Antony, who invaded Parthia in 37 B.C. with an army of 113,000 soldiers. 50 The Romans besieged a Parthian provincial capital in Media (northwest Iran), but could not subdue it. **The Parthian army arrived, and wiped out Antony's supply columns, killing 10,000 Romans.** With winter imminent, Antony had to admit defeat, and led his beaten army back through Armenia, fighting the terrain, the weather, hunger and the Parthians the whole way. Considering the hardships faced, Mark Antony did well to salvage 60-70,000 Roman soldiers from his disastrous campaign, as he could have lost his whole army and his own life. **Antony acted cruelly toward the Armenians, and this helped create a lasting impression among the Armenians that Parthian rule was preferable to Roman rule.**

**14.** Ibid. Pg. 244. A period of "détente" then occurred between Parthia and Rome which lasted almost a century (36 B.C. to 58 A.D.). 51

**15.** Ibid. Pg. 268. Without this period of Parthian-Roman détente, it would have been we-nigh impossible for some of the events of Jesus Christ's life to have occurred, as we shall see. The first such event was the coming of the Magi, or "Wise Men" to pay homage to Jesus. We read of this event in Matthew 2:1-12, which becomes more important when considered in the overall context of Roman-Parthian relations.

**16.** Ibid. Pg. 268. In the decades previous to the birth of Jesus, Rome and Parthia fought several battles with one being fought near Antioch of Syria (very close to Palestine).<sup>5</sup> In about 40 B.C., the Parthians launched a major assault which swept the Romans out of Asia for a short time. For three years (40 -37 B.C.) Palestine was within the Parthian Empire and was ruled by a Jewish vassal king under the Parthians named Antigonus. At that time King Herod (the Roman king of Judea) fled from the Parthians in fear of his life. While the Parthian-sponsored rule of Antigonus was brief, it was apparently popular with the Jews. When the Parthians withdrew across the Euphrates, Antigonus, with Jewish support, attempted to maintain himself as king of the Jews, but was defeated by Herod. Mark Antony (the Roman leader famous for his dalliance with Cleopatra) ordered Antigonus beheaded and Josephus records that this was done to compel the Jews to reaccept the hated Herod as their king<sup>6</sup>. Mark Antony then led a- massive invasion of Parthia in 37 – 36 B.C., but his army was utterly defeated by the Parthians.<sup>7</sup>

Mark Antony's defeat led to a long period of "détente" between the two empires, with the Euphrates River serving as the border between their two vast empires. This prolonged period of peaceful relations lasted from 36 B.C. until 58 A.D.



**17.** Luke 1: 5 – 25. *5There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah. His wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. 6And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. 7But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both well advanced in years.*

*8So it was, that while he was serving as priest before God in the order of his division, 9according to the custom of the priesthood, his lot fell to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. 10And the whole multitude of the people was praying outside at the hour of incense. 11Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing on the right side of the altar of incense. 12And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.*

*13But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. 14And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. 15For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother’s womb. 16And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. 17He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, ‘to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,’ £ and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”*

*18And Zacharias said to the angel, “How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is well advanced in years.”*

*19And the angel answered and said to him, “I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and was sent to speak to you and bring you these glad tidings. 20But behold, you will be mute and not able*

*to speak until the day these things take place, because you did not believe my words which will be fulfilled in their own time.”*

*21And the people waited for Zacharias, and marveled that he lingered so long in the temple. 22But when he came out, he could not speak to them; and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple, for he beckoned to them and remained speechless.*

*23So it was, as soon as the days of his service were completed, that he departed to his own house. 24Now after those days his wife Elizabeth conceived; and she hid herself five months, saying, 25“Thus the Lord has dealt with me, in the days when He looked on me, to take away my reproach among people.” [NKJV]*

**18.** *Luke 1: 26 – 38.26Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, 27to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. 28And having come in, the angel said to her, “Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; £blessed are you among women!”*

*29But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. 30Then the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus. 32He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. 33And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.”*

*34Then Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I do not know a man?”*

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*35And the angel answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God. 36Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren. 37For with God nothing will be impossible.”*

*38Then Mary said, “Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.*

**19.** Matthew 1: 18 – 19.*18Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. 19Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly.*

**20.** Luke 1: 39 – 56.*39Now Mary arose in those days and went into the hill country with haste, to a city of Judah, 40and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth. 41And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. 42Then she spoke out with a loud voice and said, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! 43But why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? 44For indeed, as soon as the voice of your greeting sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. 45Blessed is she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord.”*

*46And Mary said:*

*“My soul magnifies the Lord,*

*47 And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.*

*48 For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant;  
For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed.*

*49 For He who is mighty has done great things for me,  
And holy is His name.*

*50 And His mercy is on those who fear Him  
From generation to generation.*

*51 He has shown strength with His arm;  
He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.*

*52 He has put down the mighty from their thrones,  
And exalted the lowly.*

*53 He has filled the hungry with good things,  
And the rich He has sent away empty.*

*54 He has helped His servant Israel,  
In remembrance of His mercy,*

*55 As He spoke to our fathers,  
To Abraham and to his seed forever.”*

*56 And Mary remained with her about three months, and returned to her house.*

**21.** Luke 1: 57 – 79. *57 Now Elizabeth’s full time came for her to be delivered, and she brought forth a son. 58 When her neighbors and relatives heard how the Lord had shown great mercy to her, they rejoiced with her.*

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*59* So it was, on the eighth day, that they came to circumcise the child; and they would have called him by the name of his father, Zacharias. *60* His mother answered and said, “No; he shall be called John.”

*61* But they said to her, “There is no one among your relatives who is called by this name.” *62* So they made signs to his father—what he would have him called.

*63* And he asked for a writing tablet, and wrote, saying, “His name is John.” So, they all marveled. *64* Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he spoke, praising God. *65* Then fear came on all who dwelt around them; and all these sayings were discussed throughout all the hill country of Judea. *66* And all those who heard them kept them in their hearts, saying, “What kind of child will this be?” And the hand of the Lord was with him.

*67* Now his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying:

*68* “Blessed is the Lord God of Israel,  
For He has visited and redeemed His people,  
*69* And has raised up a horn of salvation for us  
In the house of His servant David,  
*70* As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets,  
Who have been since the world began,  
*71* That we should be saved from our enemies  
And from the hand of all who hate us,  
*72* To perform the mercy promised to our fathers  
And to remember His holy covenant,  
*73* The oath which He swore to our father Abraham:



74 *To grant us that we,  
Being delivered from the hand of our enemies,  
Might serve Him without fear,*

75 *In holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our  
life.*

76 *“And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Highest;  
For you will go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways,*

77 *To give knowledge of salvation to His people  
By the remission of their sins,*

78 *Through the tender mercy of our God,  
With which the Dayspring from on high has visited us;*

79 *To give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of  
death,*

*To guide our feet into the way of peace.”*

**22.** Matthew 2: 20 – 25. *20But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. 21And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”*

*22So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: 23“Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,” which is translated, “God with us.”*

*24Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, 25and did not know*

*her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name Jesus.*

**23.** Luke 2: 1 – 5. *1And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. 2This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. 3So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city.*

*4Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, 5to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child.*

**24.** Luke 2: 6-7. *6So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. 7And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.*

**25.** Luke 2: 8 – 20. *8Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. 10Then the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. 11For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. 12And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.”*

*13And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying:*

*14 “Glory to God in the highest,  
And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!”*

*15 So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, “Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us.” 16 And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger. 17 Now when they had seen Him, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child. 18 And all those who heard it marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds. 19 But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart. 20 Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them.*

**26.** Ibid. Pg. 273. It is surprising that God was working more closely with members of the Parthian ruling class than he was with the Jewish priests! This makes no biblical sense unless (A) the Parthians were descended from the exiled tribes of the House of Israel and (B) the Magi (Parthian priests) were Levites.

**27.** Ibid. Pg. 274. The fact that some of the Parthian ruling classes were worshippers of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is most revealing.

**28.** Luke 2: 21. *21 And when eight days were completed for the circumcision of the Child, His name was called Yeshua, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb. [HRB]*



**29.** Luke 2: 22 – 40. *22Now when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord 23(as it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every male who opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord”), 24and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, “A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.”*

*25And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. 26And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ. 27So he came by the Spirit into the temple. And when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law, 28he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said:*

*29 “Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace,  
According to Your word;*

*30 For my eyes have seen Your salvation*

*31 Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples,*

*32 A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles,*

*And the glory of Your people Israel.”*

*33And Joseph and His mother marveled at those things which were spoken of Him. 34Then Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, “Behold, this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against 35(yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.”*

*36Now there was one, Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, and had lived with a husband seven years from her virginity; 37and this*

*woman was a widow of about eighty-four years, who did not depart from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. 38And coming in that instant she gave thanks to the Lord, and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem.*

*39So when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own city, Nazareth. 40And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.*

**30.**Ibid. Pg. 270. The Magi were powerful members of one of the two assemblies which elected Parthian monarchs and wielded great influence within the empire. One assembly was composed of members of the royal family (the Arsacids), and the other consisted of the priests (the “Magi”) and influential Parthians of non-royal blood (the “Wise Men”). The Magi and Wise Men were jointly known as the Megistanes.<sup>10</sup> The *King James Version* of the Bible states in Matthew 2:1 that “wise men from the east” came to worship Jesus. The term “Wise Men,” can be seen as the proper title of Parthian Megistanes. The Greek word translated “wise men” is “magian”, literally meaning “Persian astronomer or priest.”<sup>11</sup> Parthia had long governed all Persian territory at the time of Christ, and the “Wise Men” cited in the Bible were clearly members of the Megistanes, very high Parthian officials.

**31.**Ibid. Pg. 276. When the Magi were led by an angel of God to pay homage to the young Jesus, they doubtless asked Joseph and Mary everything they could think of concerning Jesus’ background. They must have learned that Jesus was a blood descendent of Phares line of King David. This relationship made Jesus an Arsacid, a blood relative of Parthia’s kings. Jesus Christ was technically eligible for the Parthian throne.

**32.**Matthew 2: 1 – 11.<sup>1</sup>*Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, <sup>2</sup>saying, “Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him.”*

<sup>3</sup>*When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. <sup>4</sup>And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born.*

<sup>5</sup>*So they said to him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet:*

<sup>6</sup> *‘But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,  
Are not the least among the rulers of Judah;  
For out of you shall come a Ruler  
Who will shepherd My people Israel?’”*

<sup>7</sup>*Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, determined from them what time the star appeared. <sup>8</sup>And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the young Child, and when you have found Him, bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also.”*

<sup>9</sup>*When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. <sup>10</sup>When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. <sup>11</sup>And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.*

**33.** Matthew 2: 12 – 15. *12Then, being divinely warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country another way.*

*13Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, “Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him.”*

*14When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt, 15and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, “Out of Egypt I called My Son.”*

**34.** Matthew 2: 16 – 18. *16Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men. 17Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying:*

*18 “A voice was heard in Ramah,  
Lamentation, weeping, and great mourning,  
Rachel weeping for her children,  
Refusing to be comforted,  
Because they are no more.”*

**35.** Matthew 2: 19 – 21. *19Now when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, 20saying, “Arise, take the young Child and His mother, and go to the land of*

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*Israel, for those who sought the young Child's life are dead.” 21Then he arose, took the young Child and His mother, and came into the land of Israel.*

**36.***Matthew 2: 22 – 23.22But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea instead of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And being warned by God in a dream, he turned aside into the region of Galilee. 23And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, “He shall be called a Nazarene.”*

**37.***Luke 2:41 -50.41His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. 42And when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast.*

**38.***Luke 2: 43 – 50.43When they had finished the days, as they returned, the Boy Jesus lingered behind in Jerusalem. And Joseph and His mother did not know it; 44but supposing Him to have been in the company, they went a day's journey, and sought Him among their relatives and acquaintances. 45So when they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking Him. 46Now so it was that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. 47And all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers. 48So when they saw Him, they were amazed; and His mother said to Him, “Son, why have You done this to us? Look, your father and I have sought You anxiously.”*



*49And He said to them, “Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s business?” 50But they did not understand the statement which He spoke to them.*

**39.**Numbers 4: 1 – 3.*1Then the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying: 2“Take a census of the sons of Kohath from among the children of Levi, by their families, by their fathers’ house, 3from thirty years old and above, even to fifty years old, all who enter the service to do the work in the tabernacle of meeting.*

**40.**Ibid. Pgs. 139 – 159.Information about Carthage from beginning as a colony to its end after Hannibal’s failed to destroy Rome allowing them time to recover and this led to his eventual defeat and the defeat of Carthage.

**41.**Ibid. Pg. 284.Many traditions assert that **Joseph of Arimathea and Jesus** were not only present in Britain, but **had homes in the area of Glastonbury, England.** Supporting these traditions, E. Raymond Capt cites evidence that Glastonbury bore two titles from ancient times – “Secretum Domini” and “Domus Dei” (Latin for “The Secret of the Lord,” and “The House of God”).<sup>23</sup>

**42.**Ibid. Pg. 284.Capt also lists a **fifteenth century document that Joseph of Arimathea converted King Arviragus of the first century A.D. Britain to the Christian religion,** and that this early king in Britain gave Joseph and his party twelve portions of tax-free land in the area of Glastonbury.<sup>25</sup>

**43.**Ibid. Pgs. 285-286. One other possibility exists. Earlier chapters have shown that both the **Israelite/Phoenician and the Carthaginian Empires of the first millennium B.C. planted colonies of Israelites in North America.** It was also shown that some Carthaginians likely fled North Africa to seek refuge in their North American colony after the fall of Carthage. In chapter five we also saw evidence that **this Punic colony in North America lasted until about 500 A.D., so there was a significant Israelite civilization in North America during the life of Christ.** Since Christ was visiting the regions of the earth inhabited by the descendants of the ten tribes, could he have visited ancient North America as well? The surprising answer may be “Yes!”

**44.**Ibid. Pg. 286. Consider the Quetzalcoatl legends of the ancient New World. While “Quetzalcoatl” is usually depicted as a serpent god, the legends record that some Quetzalcoatl legends are quite different.

In *Voyages to the New World*, Nigel Davies includes a compilation of various **Quetzalcoatl legends.** These legends include the assertions that Quetzalcoatl “**had a white skin and ...was traditionally expected to return...but once only in human form,**” that amid the lamentations of his people, Quetzalcoatl thereafter set out on his long journey to the place in the East where he was destined to meet his end,” that “**he rose to heaven and entered therein,**” and that “**he remained four days in the land of the dead and, on the eighth day, reappeared as the Morning Star.**”<sup>34</sup> Davies also comments that Quetzalcoatl is depicted as being a “**god in human form,**” and that he was the “**creator God**”.<sup>35</sup> It is also significant that the

**humanized Quetzalcoatl legends appear only in the Christian era.**

**45.** Ibid. Pgs. 286-287. There are additional Peruvian legends about a deity named **Viracocha, who “departed across the sea,” but was destined to return.** <sup>36</sup> Viracocha is also portrayed in Spanish sources **“like Quetzalcoatl – as a benevolent figure who travelled from place to place, preaching repentance and performing miracles.”** <sup>37</sup> Charles Boland’s book, *They All Discovered America*, adds that **“the first Quetzalcoatl is said to have sprung from a virgin birth.”** <sup>38</sup>

**New World legends about a human-deity who was a benevolent white (Semitic) person, preached repentance, performed miracles, was both divine and human at the same time, was born of a virgin, was from the Old World, took a long journey to the East (across the Atlantic toward the Old World) on a mission of self-sacrifice, was dead, but was resurrected and rose to heaven and who would return at a future time** unmistakably point to one (and only one) historical person; Jesus Christ. Indeed, many of the doctrines about the humanized Quetzalcoatl parallel Christian teachings about Jesus Christ! Even Quetzalcoatl’s title (the Morning Star) is one of Jesus Christ’s biblical titles (Revelation 22: 16). **The many Christian themes attached to the early Quetzalcoatl strongly indicate that the humanized Quetzalcoatl represented Jesus Christ who visited the New World during the ‘lost’ years of his life. These ancient New World legends even record that he returned to the Old World aware of the destiny of self-sacrifice which was ahead of him.**



**46.** Ibid. Pg. 287. The fanciful legends depicting Quetzalcoatl as a serpent god do not, of course apply to Jesus Christ. Since Satan is depicted as a ‘serpent’ in the Bible (Genesis 3: 1-13, Revelation 12: 9-15), **it is apparent that the worship of Quetzalcoatl was subverted from biblical themes into a form of Satan-worship (even including rites of human sacrifice).** The separate legendary figure of Viracocha may also be based on Jesus Christ, or even one of the Apostles who were sent by Christ to “all nations” (Matthew 28:19).

**Since Carthaginians were also North Africans (familiar with Egypt’s pyramids), it is also likely that the presence of pyramids in the Meso-American civilizations of the New World attests to the linkages between the two regions.**

**47.** Luke 3: 23. The Bible asserts that **Jesus Christ began his ministry at the age of thirty. This is significant because the Old Testament required a man to be thirty years old in order to serve in the priesthood (Numbers 4: 3).**

**When Jesus returned to Judea, one of his first public acts was to be baptized by John the Baptist in the Jordan River (Matthew 3:13-16).**

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## About the Author



The author used the G.I. Bill to go to college and was a National Merit Scholar graduating from the University of Tennessee with a B.S in Operations Research. This was followed in about ten years with a M.S. in Engineering Technology from Eastern Kentucky University.

His primary career was in Industrial Engineering for over 25 years in which he was instrumental in originating and implementing cost reduction projects that saved the companies he worked for hundreds of thousands of dollars in most of those years. Many of these projects involved his inventions of fixtures and new methods of operation and control of processes that not only saved money, they greatly improved the quality of the products manufactured. During his career, he worked with Corporate Presidents, Group and Division Managers, Data Processing Managers, Accountants; on down to plant managers, supervisors, plant work forces, and maintenance in bringing improvements to numerous plants. This required being able to present ideas and concepts that were clearly understood and accepted by everyone at every level.

Before going to college, the author completed two tours of duty in the United States Air Force reaching the rank of Staff Sergeant. During the Viet Nam War, the author was stationed on Okinawa for about three and a half years. His position on an intercontinental missile crew was Mechanic One in charge of inertial guidance and flight controls of four nuclear missiles in one of eight hardened sites over 100 feet below the surface of the island of Okinawa. His position was also part of the launch crew that if war had broken out, he along with the Launch Officer in charge would authenticate the launch orders, and then would together push the buttons to launch the four missiles. He worked his way up to the top

position in the Standard Eval Crew as part of the Inspector General of the Commander in Chief of the Pacific Air Force.

After leaving the Air Force, the author worked in residential and commercial construction several years. He ran a business of building houses and later he ran several crews that excavated and built the framework of concrete forms for residential driveways and high-rise buildings. While going to college, the author was nearly always working on remodeling the homes he bought and lived in which doubled his investment when sold. This was used to pay for his college education.

In the Spring of 1994, everything changed for the author. The author experienced what he believed was a face to face meeting with Jesus [Yeshua] Christ. He was told that Christianity had lost its way over the last two thousand years. It had become a religion based on the Traditions of Men not the Truth of God as written in the Word of God, the Holy Bible. He was asked to be Christ's Minister. Then he was told to study the Word of God and write what he learned only from the Holy Scriptures and publish and tell of it to all who would listen. In giving this commission, Jesus [Yeshua] Christ made him Christ's Apostle and Prophet as his writings would present the True Christian Beliefs, Doctrines, and Practices Based on the Holy Scriptures, Not Traditions of Men and would also involve prophetic dreams and visions.

The author was ordained as a Minister in a church organization that he served for nearly ten years. He continually traveled to congregations in Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky, Tennessee, Arkansas, Louisiana, Texas, Georgia, and Florida preaching in different congregations each week. He also went to Canada, Jamaica, Australia, and to many Feast sites preaching what Yeshua [Jesus] Christ revealed to him in the Word of God. The primary comment from individuals in those congregations was "When is Richard coming back?"

*The Early Years of the Christ*

Without going into all the things that happened, The author resigned and left that church organization. Since that time, he has occasionally preached in several different and independent churches while he concentrated on writing what was revealed to him in the Word of God. It was after he began experiencing dreams that the Holy Spirit inspired him to start writing books. So, far he has written and completed a trilogy called ***The Story of the New Immortals***. The First book he completed is ***Part 1*** and tells about Eternity Past, ***The Beginning of the Beginning***. The Second book is ***Part 3*** of ***The Story of the New Immortals*** and tells about Eternity Future, ***The End of the Beginning***. The Third book he completed is ***Part 2a*** of ***The Story of the New Immortals*** and tells about ***The Early Years of the Christ, Including the Missing Years***. The Fourth book he completed is ***Part 2b***, of ***The Story of the New Immortals*** and tells about ***The Ministry Years of the Christ***

Read the following verse in your Bible including what follows it. If the mind of God is guiding our lives we will live as Jesus [Yeshua] would in our shoes and beyond this earthly life we will be part of the Wedding Supper of the Lamb when Christ returns.

Philippians 2:5 (NKJV)

***<sup>5</sup>Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ [Yeshua] Jesus,***

Books by this author: *Richard O'Decatur*

***The Story of the New Immortals,  
Part 1:***

***The Beginning of the Beginning***

A Fictional Biography  
[358 Pages]

This story tells of the beginning of all things. We find Elohim [God], the Father, Yahweh; Elohim, the Son, Yeshua [Jesus]; and Elohim, the Holy Spirit having always existed in eternity. In this story, we go back before the creation of the world mentioned in Genesis Chapter 1 into eternity past, when Elohim began creating what is called the third heaven and the angelic beings, and continues to the creation of the earth.

It tells of a Great Archangel, possibly named Lucifer, who got one third of the angelic realm to rebel against Elohim. It presents the creation of the earth, how it became without form and void. It tells of a somewhat re-creation of earth and populating it with all living things and finally the creation Adam and Eve. It tells of their life in the Garden of Eden, ending with their sin of disobedience and being driven from the Garden.

Then it tells of the population of mankind throughout the earth and the growth of evil. Then Noah and his family build the Ark and survive with pairs of animals and birds when the rains came and waters flood the entire earth killing all that breathed air on the face of the earth. It tells of the spread of mankind from Noah's three sons and their wives. Then Nimrod comes on the scene with his wife, Semiramis spreading the Mystery Babylon Pagan religion until the building of tower of Babel and the dividing

of the languages scattering mankind from Mesopotamia. It ends with the calling of Abram [Abraham] mentioned in Genesis Chapter 12.

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***The Story of the New Immortals,  
Part 2:***

***The Early Years of the Christ Including  
the Missing Years***

A Fictional Biography  
[346 Pages]

Many of you have read the four gospel accounts of the life of Jesus Christ. You find many gaps in the story of His life from His birth to age thirty when He began His Ministry. Have you ever wondered what events prepared the land of Judea and Galilee for the Christ to be born, grow up, and begin His earthly ministry? Have you ever wondered what life was like for Jesus during His childhood? The Bible only tells us about His birth, then jumps two years to when the Magi came to Bethlehem. Immediately afterwards, the family of the Christ escaped to Egypt. After living for some time in Egypt, they return to Nazareth.

Then we fast-forward ten years to when He was about twelve, when the family goes to Jerusalem for the Passover. The next we read about the life of the Christ, eighteen years have passed and He is about thirty years of age. Jesus is baptized by His second cousin, John the Baptist, and He goes into the wilderness for forty days and nights. What happened during those missing eighteen years in which he became a teenager, went through life in His

twenties, and finally reached the age of thirty where we find Him being baptized?

As we read in the Gospels about Jesus entering the synagogue in Nazareth, we find people do not really know Him except by being associated with His mother, Mary and His brothers and sisters. This gives the impression that Jesus had been away from Nazareth for those eighteen years. I have always wondered who Joseph of Arimathea was and my research has found that he was not only a relative, but played a major role in the life of Jesus.

I have written a Fictional Biography that I believe will answer these questions and many more. Again, as in my other two books, I have felt God's inspiration in taking on this monumental task. After considerable research, and prayer, my dreams began again as the Holy Spirit guided my mind and my hands as I started writing this story about ten years ago and have recently finished it in 2020.

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***The Story of the New Immortals,  
Part 3:***

***The End of the Beginning***

A Fictional Biography  
[356 Pages]

This story takes place just after Jesus Christ's Second Coming. While it looks back at events that took place before His return, it primarily focuses on the work of the Saints of God the Father, Yahweh; as Jesus Christ reigns from Jerusalem during the Millennium and beyond.



*The Early Years of the Christ*

This story tells of the Wedding Supper of the Lamb and those who were resurrected from the dead and those who were transformed in the twinkling of an eye as they celebrate their triumph over sin. It tells of the preparation to attack the forces of Satan as their army closes in on Jerusalem. Then Jesus Christ, King of Kings and Lord of Lords leads the armies from Heaven to the earth. They destroy the two hundred-million-man army of Satan. Satan is captured and bound in chains and is cast into a Pit in Hell. The Antichrist and False Prophet are taken, judged by Christ, and are then thrown alive into the Lake of Fire that is a portal to Hell fire.

The Saints of God are sent on missions to gather those who have survived the Great Tribulation and Day of the Lord as God poured out punishment on those who refused to turn from sin and evil as you can read in the Book of Revelation. Then the rebuilding of millions of cities, infrastructure, buildings to manufacture things, and billions of homes. These will house those who are raised in the second resurrection and allow them to live during their time of judgment.

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*$\mathcal{R}$  of  $\mathcal{D}$*

*The Early Years of the Christ*

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